

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
JOINTLY WITH
COMMITTEE ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
JOINTLY WITH
COMMITTEE ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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February 27, 2026
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ROOM 3

B E F O R E: Rita C. Joseph, Chairperson of
Committee on Higher Education

Julie Won, Chairperson of
Committee on Workforce Development

COUNCIL MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER
EDUCATION:

Joann Ariola
Eric Dinowitz
Harvey D. Epstein
Farah N. Louis
Virginia Maloney
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A P P E A R A N C E S

Lauren Anderson, Vice Chancellor for Career Engagement and Industry Partnerships at City University of New York

Andrea Soonachan, Senior University Dean for K-16 Initiatives and Adult Pathways at City University of New York

Douglas Lipari, Executive Director of the New York City Office of Talent and Workforce Development

Leah Hebert, Chief Policy and Programs Officer of the New York City Office of Talent and Workforce Development

Thwiba Eltom, Director of Apprenticeship and Accelerated Training of the New York City Office of Talent and Workforce Development

Eli Dvorkin, Editorial and Policy Director of the Center for an Urban Future

Akkeem Polack, Chairperson of the University Student Senate and CUNY trustee

Rhoda Wilson, Vice Chair of Legislative Affairs at the CUNY University Student Senate

Damir Shavkatov, Vice Chair for Senior College Affairs for the CUNY University Student Senate

Benjamin Wade, University Student Senate

Timothy Cecere, President of St. Francis College

Greg Morris, CEO of the New York City Employment and Training Coalition

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

Kalani Leifer, CEO of COOP Careers

3 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Testing, testing. This
4 is a sound check for the New York City Council
5 hearing from the Committee on Higher Education, joint
6 with Workforce Development. Today's date is February
7 27, 2026. We're located at 250 Broadway, Hearing Room
8 3. This is being recorded by Sergeant Ben Levy.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning, good
10 morning. Welcome to the New York City Council hearing
11 on the Committee on Higher Education joint with
12 Workforce Development.

13 At this time, please silence all
14 electronics and do not approach the dais. Again, do
15 not approach the dais.

16 If you need to fill out a slip and are
17 testifying, please see a Sergeant-at-Arms.

18 Thank you for your cooperation.

19 Chairs, you may begin.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Good morning. I am
21 Council Member Rita Joseph, Chair of the Committee on
Higher Education. Welcome to our joint hearing with
the Committee on Workforce Development, Chaired by
Council Member Julie Won.

Today's oversight hearing is Aligning
Higher Education with Workforce Demand. Let me offer

3 some background. CUNY and the New York City Office of
4 Talent and Workforce Development work together in a
5 variety of ways to ensure that students of all
6 backgrounds leave CUNY with the skills they need to
7 enter and succeed in the workplace, to ensure that
8 all New Yorkers can access good paying careers, and
9 that employers can access New York City's talent so
10 they can thrive today and in the future. CUNY and New
11 York City Talent have cooperated on two initiatives
12 in the past couple of years, the Center for Youth
13 Employment, Path to an Exclusive Economy, and Action
14 Plan for Young Adult Career Success, and the Green
15 Economy Action Plan. Both action plans lay out
16 specific goals for achieving them. These strategies
17 include planning for establishing career-related
18 academics and advising, career exploration,
19 work-based learning, internship, apprenticeship, and
20 transitional programming from college into the
21 workforce for CUNY students and recent graduates. The
strategies also look at the ways to involve more
employers in partnership that make everything else
possible. Our Committees are looking forward to
hearing how CUNY and New York City Talent have been
working together to achieve the goals set in both of

3 these action plans. Now this month, the Center for
4 Urban Future published a report entitled Five Ideas
5 for How the Mayor Mamdani Can Bolster Workforce
6 Development, which points out New York City is facing
7 a two-sided affordability crisis. The report notes
8 that rising costs are making life difficult for New
9 York City residents, but just as consequential in
10 breakdown on the income side of the equation, meaning
11 that too many New Yorkers are unemployed or stuck in
12 low-wage work with little opportunity for
13 advancement. The report notes that despite New York
14 City's many excellent career training organizations
15 and CUNY's relevant career preparation programs, City
16 investments in workforce development has lagged far
17 behind the need. The Committees are looking forward
18 to learning about the report's five ideas for
19 bolstering workforce development, and we are pleased
20 to have Eli Dvorkin, one of the report's authors,
21 here to discuss those ideas with us.

These are the Center for Future's five
ideas. Making a bold investment in workforce
development through New York City Talent Development
Fund, a career impact bond, a workforce AI readiness
fund, or by tapping funds from rezoning,

2 significantly increasing flexible outcomes, driven
3 City funding, and create new mechanisms to scale that
4 work.

5 Two, establish an economic mobility
6 cabinet and workforce tsar in City Hall to elevate
7 workforce inside City government, coordinate
8 workforce policies across agencies, and hold the
9 systems accountable for results.

10 Provide free OMNY Card and Day One
11 childcare support for CUNY students and workforce
12 training participants to boost completion rates,
13 accelerate credential attainment, and maximize
14 returns on public investment.

15 Four, launch a major effort to recruit
16 the next 100 employers to partner on building
17 pathways into good jobs by expanding skill-based
18 learning hiring, scaling employers' engagement,
19 strengthening connection between CUNY non-for-profit
20 providers and industry.

21 Help scale up CUNY's promising but still
small-scale career success programs, including CUNY
Beyond, the Inclusive Economy Initiative, and CUNY 2X
Tech to ensure that CUNY students doesn't just earn a
degree but also have strong career outcomes.

3 The Committees are interested in learning
4 CUNY and New York City's Talent reaction to CUF's
5 ideas and their thoughts on whether and how they
6 might be implemented.

7 Now I'd like to acknowledge my Colleagues
8 on the Committee on Higher Education who are present.
9 Council Member Dinowitz, Council Member Hanif,
10 Council Member Epstein, recognize Council Member
11 Ariola, Council Member Louis on Zoom.

12 Now I would like to thank Juvanie
13 Piquant, my Chief-of-Staff; Julia Goldman-Pinkham
14 Committee's Senior Legislative Counsel; Regina Paul,
15 the Committee's Senior Legislative Policy Analysis;
16 and Allie Stoffer, the Committee's Financial
17 Analysis.

18 Now, I'd like to invite Chair Won to give
19 her opening statement.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON WON: Thank you, Chair
21 Joseph, for your partnership on this important
22 hearing.

23 My name is Julie Won, and I have the
24 privilege of Chairing Council Committee on Workforce
25 Development. I want to note that this is the first

3 hearing of this newly established Committee, and I'm
4 honored to lead the work in this space.

5 As Chair Joseph noted, today's hearing
6 examines how we are aligning higher education with
7 the demands of New York City's workforce. There's
8 237,000 students across 26 campuses. For many of
9 those students, CUNY is the single most important
10 pathway to economic mobility. Its mission is to serve
11 as a vehicle for the upward mobility of the
12 disadvantaged. That mission is one this Committee
13 takes seriously. A recent report from the Center of
14 Urban Future found that roughly 1.1 million
15 working-age New Yorkers are unemployed,
16 underemployed, or earning minimum wage. The market
17 for entry-level jobs has dropped 37 percent since
18 2022, and the rise of artificial intelligence is
19 beginning to reshape entire industries, which raises
20 serious questions about whether the skills our
21 students are learning today will still be in demand
tomorrow. Behind each of these statistics is a New
Yorker trying to build a career and support a family
in one of the most expensive cities in the world.

20 This Committee exists to make sure that
21 the City's workforce development infrastructure is

3 working for them. We know that there are areas of
4 real opportunity. The City's Green Economy Action
5 Plan projects hundreds of thousands of green-collar
6 jobs by 2040 in construction, engineering,
7 management, and business. The Center of Youth
8 Employment Action Plan laid out 15 strategies for
9 connecting young New Yorkers to career pathways.
10 These are promising frameworks, but these are only as
11 good as their implementation, and today we want to
12 understand what concrete progress has been made so
13 far.

14 I also recognize that for students to be
15 appropriately prepared, they need to have professors
16 who are adequately paid and receiving benefits as
17 full-time employees. Specifically, this Committee
18 wants to hear from CUNY and New York City Talent
19 about how they are working together to translate
20 labor market data into curriculum changes, and how
21 they are measuring whether career learning programs
are actually leading to good-paying jobs. We also
want to understand what happened with the
600-million-dollar investment from the Green Economy
Action Plan. I look forward to hearing from CUNY, New
York City Talent, and each of our witnesses today,

3 and to a productive discussion about how the Council
4 can support this critical work.

5 Before I begin, I would like to thank the
6 Committee Staff, Senior Counsel Alex Paulenoff;
7 Senior Policy Analyst William Hongach; and Financial
8 Analyst Spencer Kuhn for their hard work in putting
9 this hearing together.

10 I also want to acknowledge that we've
11 been joined by Council Member Cabán on Zoom and
12 Council Member Virginia Maloney.

13 I'll now turn it over to Chair Joseph.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you, Chair
15 Won.

16 I'd like to remind everyone who wishes to
17 testify in person today that you must fill out a
18 witness slip, which is located on the desk of the
19 Sergeant-at-Arms near the entrance of this room.
20 Please fill out the slip, even if you're already
21 registered in advance that you'll be testifying in
person today.

To allow as many people as possible to
testify, testimony will be limited to three minutes
per person, whether you're testifying in person or on
Zoom. I'm going to ask my Colleagues to limit their

3 questions and comments to five minutes. Please note
4 that witnesses who are here in person will testify
5 before those who will sign in on Zoom webinar.

6 Now in accordance with the rules of the
7 Council, I will have the Committee Counsel from the
8 Committee on Workforce Development administer the
9 affirmation to witnesses from the City University and
10 New York City's Office of Talent and Workforce
11 Development.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL PAULENOFF: Thank you,
13 Chair. Alex Paulenoff, Senior Counsel.

14 Will all members of the Administration
15 today please raise your right hands.

16 Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth,
17 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your
18 testimony today, and to respond honestly to Council
19 Member questions?

20 ADMINISTRATION: (INAUDIBLE)

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL PAULENOFF: Thank you.
You may begin when ready.

VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Good morning,
Honorable Chairpersons Joseph and Won and Members of
the Committees on Higher Education and Workforce
Development. Thank you for the invitation to testify

3 today on the City University of New York's commitment
4 to boosting the career success of graduates and
5 delivering the workforce our city's economy needs in
6 order to grow inclusively.

7 My name is Lauren Anderson, and I have
8 the honor of serving as the Vice Chancellor for
9 Career Engagement and Industry Partnerships at CUNY.
10 In this capacity, I report to the Chancellor and the
11 University Provost, our Chief Academic Officer, and
12 shepherd CUNY's work to boost career outcomes of all
13 students, integrate career connections, including
14 paid internships, into degree paths, expand effective
15 non-degree workforce training focused on in-demand
16 occupations, and help fuel the growth of public and
17 private organizations across the city through
18 connections to CUNY talent, expertise, and assets.
19 This role is a relatively new one for CUNY. It
20 reflects Chancellor Félix Matos Rodriguez and the
21 CUNY Board of Trustees' deep commitment to elevating
and prioritizing career success and workforce
development at the highest levels of leadership.

22 However, CUNY's mission to serve as an
23 engine of economic mobility goes all the way back to
24 our founding. In 1849, the Free Academy of New York,

3 later known as City College, opened its doors for the
4 purpose of providing a first-rate education to all,
5 regardless of means or background. At its opening,
6 founders noted that future students would come to
7 CUNY seeking an education, quote, for the purpose of
8 applying it to some useful vocation and not as a mere
9 matter of curious information or process of
10 intellectual discipline. In short, the commitment to
11 propelling our students into rewarding professions
12 that they and the City seek is in our DNA. Last year,
13 CUNY campuses secured seven of the top ten spots on
14 Wall Street Journal's Best Value Colleges, which
15 takes into account alumni outcomes and student return
16 on investment. Similarly, Forbes released their list
17 of 25 colleges with the highest payoff, where
18 Brooklyn College took the top spot for the first
19 time, and CUNY had eight colleges total, more than
20 any other university system.

21 Yet despite our successes, we recognize
that CUNY is not yet living up to its full potential
as an engine of inclusive economic mobility. More can
be done to ensure our degree and non-degree programs
are seamless pathways into the jobs that employers
are looking to fill. To address this, the 2023 CUNY

3 Lifting New York Strategic Plan set out bold goals to
4 boost the employability of CUNY graduates. They
5 include, by 2030, 75 percent of our Associate Applied
6 Science, or AAS, degrees and bachelor's recipients
7 will have a job offer at graduation, with 80 percent
8 consistently employed after one year. It also charges
9 CUNY with tripling our paid internship participation
10 rates to 30 percent. Meeting this goal will require
11 exponential acceleration, not just tinkering around
12 the edges. Fortunately, though many universities
13 across the nation struggle to find ways to ensure
14 students transition to the workforce, we at CUNY are
15 lucky. We've seen what works. For instance, we know
16 that students who participate in paid internships are
17 three times more likely to have a job offer at
18 graduation. Students who meet with an integrated
19 advisor or enroll in courses developed with industry
20 are two times more likely to have a job offer at
21 graduation. In academic departments that utilize
career-infused degree maps, we see an up to 144
percent bump in graduate jobs. In academic
departments with an industry specialist, 94 percent
of reported jobs are aligned with the major, versus a

3 30 percent average across departments that do not
4 have them.

5 Yet, these interventions only exist in
6 pockets across CUNY. We must scale evidence-based
7 solutions to reach all students where they are. Only
8 25 percent of CUNY students go to career services,
9 but 100 percent, we hope, go to class. Campuses must
10 integrate workforce connections into academic
11 pathways. That's why this past October, in his State
12 of the University Address, the Chancellor announced
13 CUNY Beyond, a new transformational effort to scale
14 and integrate career connections into every
15 undergraduate degree path. CUNY Beyond will invest in
16 each of our 18 undergraduate campuses by 2030 to
17 elevate, connect, and grow what works. We began in
18 July with four initial campuses, Borough of Manhattan
19 Community College, LaGuardia Community College,
20 Hunter College, and Lehman College, which together
21 serve 55,000 students. The Governor's FY27 executive
budget provides CUNY with 6.8 million dollars to
expand to three additional campuses this coming July,
and we're hoping to work with the Council and the
City to expand to additional community colleges in
this wave.

3 We are grateful to the Center for an
4 Urban Future, CUF, which has included scaling CUNY
5 Beyond in their recent recommendations to Mayor
6 Mamdani, as well as to Robin Hood Foundation, who
7 also called on the City to help us grow this
8 ambitious initiative in their December mayoral
9 transition playbook.

10 The City's Office of Talent and Workforce
11 Development has been an essential partner in meeting
12 these goals. Its support and collaborative policy
13 development provided the foundational building blocks
14 for CUNY Beyond and many of our K-16 initiatives,
15 which my colleague, Senior University Dean Andrea
16 Soonachan, will discuss in just a moment. Just a few
17 highlights include, in coordination with NYC Talent,
18 CUNY and DYCD launched CUNY Career Launch, an
19 SYEP-funded program that provides paid internships
20 for 2,000 students each summer, with a focus on
21 freshmen and sophomores. In 2022, CUNY and the City
University of New York created the CUNY Inclusive
Economy Initiative, or CIE, which builds on our
successful CUNY 2X Tech collaboration to embed
integrated advisors and industry specialists into
departments. This initiative includes a focus, but

3 not an exclusive investment, on in-demand sectors,
4 including healthcare, green economy, business and
5 finance, and tech. Today, 5,300 students have been
6 served by CIE, and 2,100 businesses have been engaged
7 by the CIE Industry Specialist Network since spring
8 2023. Complementing the CIE Campus Network of
9 Industry Specialists, the new Industry Support Hub at
10 CUNY acts as a first stop for industry partners
11 looking to navigate to any CUNY resources. 75 percent
12 of inquiries focus on talent recruitment, 25 percent
13 seek help with employer education benefits, access to
14 faculty expertise, and other connections.

15 Originally incubated by the City's Tech
16 Talent Pipeline Partnership, Practitioners in
17 Residence, or PIRC, recruits and trains industry
18 professionals from across the city to teach rapidly
19 emerging in-demand skills. Adopted and expanded by
20 CUNY to tech, business, and healthcare in 2023, PIRC
21 has recruited more than 75 companies, including
LinkedIn, Etsy, Barclays, Bank of New York, Mellon,
Google, Oscar Health, and Peloton to teach in our
classrooms. Building on this success will not be
easy. Tripling paid internships requires 32,000 more
paid internships every year. Last year, in New York

3 City, only 11,000 to 12,000 internships were posted.
4 Employers are a critical partner in this work. 31,000
5 businesses recruit from CUNY, and many of them,
6 including members of the New York Jobs CEO Council,
7 have made meaningful commitments to hire CUNY
8 students. Just last fall, we celebrated 10,000 CUNY
9 students hired by the Council's 29 corporate members.
10 We need more employer partners to turn to CUNY, and
11 in turn, we must make it easier for them to navigate
12 to the talent they seek. This partnership will be
13 necessary to continue to further align higher
14 education with workforce needs.

15 Thank you, again, to the Chairs for the
16 invitation to be here today, and to Speaker Menin for
17 her support for the new Workforce Development
18 Committee. I welcome your questions and an ongoing
19 conversation on this important topic, and will now
20 turn things over to Dean Soonachan.

21 DEAN SOONACHAN: Good morning, Chairs
Joseph and Won, and Members of the New York City
Council Committees on Workforce Development and on
Higher Education. Thank you for this opportunity to
speak with you today about CUNY's programs to advance
access to higher education for all New Yorkers.

3 It's an honor to be here representing
4 CUNY as the Senior University Dean for K-16
5 Initiatives and Adult Pathways. In this role, I
6 manage a portfolio of programs that create strong
7 on-ramps to college and careers for young people and
8 adult learners alike, helping new students to find
9 their path, and helping young New Yorkers save time
10 and money on their path to a college degree and a
11 career that pays a living wage. These programs
12 reflect CUNY's deep investment in and commitment to
13 our future students, and our understanding that we
14 must work in partnership with public schools, City
15 agencies, and community-based partners to reach our
16 shared goals for equity and access.

17 72 percent of jobs nationwide will
18 require post-secondary education or training by 2031,
19 and the vast majority of jobs that pay a living wage
20 will be held by workers with education beyond high
21 school. The pathway to economic security for New York
City students runs through post-secondary credentials
that lead to in-demand careers. Preparing students to
earn those credentials early, before they graduate
high school, is one of the most powerful levers that
we have to accelerate workforce entry and long-term

3 wage growth. Our strategy begins with an opportunity
4 to gain a meaningful head start, providing students
5 with college credits that transfer to all CUNY
6 campuses and the confidence to succeed in college
7 classrooms. In 2025 alone, nearly 16,000 high school
8 seniors graduated, having earned an average of 5.5
9 college credits, saving New York families millions of
10 dollars in tuition collectively and giving these
11 students a head start towards degree completion.

12 College Now is the foundation of this
13 work at CUNY. Nineteen CUNY campuses partner with 592
14 New York City public and charter high schools to
15 offer college credit courses each year. In the last
16 academic year, 31,000 public school students
17 completed over 44,000 credit-bearing courses. Nearly
18 90 percent of College Now students successfully
19 transfer all their earned credits to college. This
20 early academic momentum translates into stronger
21 completion outcomes. College Now alumni have a 13
percentage point higher three-year associate degree
completion rate and a 7 percent higher six-year
bachelor's degree completion rate compared to those
at CUNY who did not participate.

3 Building on the strong evidence that
4 early college credit improves degree completion and
5 therefore long-term earnings, we've intentionally
6 aligned dual enrollment with structured career
7 pathways through expanded workforce partnerships with
8 New York City's Department of Youth and Community
9 Development and New York City Public Schools,
10 launching career pathway partnerships through Future
11 Ready NYC, Work, Learn, Grow, and the Summer Youth
12 Employment Program.

13 Future Ready NYC is a partnership between
14 New York City Public Schools, CUNY campuses, and
15 employer partners that reimagines high school by
16 integrating early college credit, industry
17 credentials, and work-based learning in high-growth
18 sectors including healthcare, technology, business,
19 and education. This year 157 high schools have
20 partnered with CUNY campuses to offer 197 career
21 pathways. Each of these features a two to three
course sequence aligned to in-demand jobs. The
program has grown steadily with enrollment rising
from about 7,500 students last year to projected
10,000 students in Fiscal Year '26.

3 DYCD's Work, Learn, Grow employment

4 program connects the power of early college courses
5 to paid career-connected experiences. Work, Learn,
6 Grow provides New York City high school students age
7 16 to 20 who previously participated in SYEP with a
8 comprehensive 22-week paid opportunity to develop
9 work readiness skills, explore post-secondary
10 pathways, and earn college credit. Initially created
11 by the council as a year-round SYEP extension, Work,
12 Learn, Grow has evolved over the past decade into a
13 true model of interagency partnership through
14 collaboration with New York City Talent and DYCD.
15 Last year, Work, Learn, Grow served 6,400 students
16 and we're projected to enroll 6,650 in this academic
17 year.

18 CUNY Reach builds on that by expanding
19 the possibilities for linking paid work and college
20 coursework through collaboration with SYEP. Piloted
21 in summer 2025, CUNY Reach integrates CUNY college
courses in the summer with SYEP experiences through
career-ready SYEP high schools. In its initial pilot,
three CUNY campuses partnered with four
community-based organizations to serve 53 students,
demonstrating strong proof of concept to this

3 integrated approach, and it's on track to expand this
4 coming summer.

5 CUNY Reconnect expands our work to New
6 Yorkers at every stage of life, not just high school
7 graduation. In fall 2022, with support from New York
8 City Council, we launched CUNY Reconnect to address a
9 pressing workforce challenge. Hundreds of thousands
10 of working-age adults who've earned college credits
11 yet stopped short of completing a degree. At the core
12 of CUNY Reconnect is direct financial support, nearly
13 7.5 million distributed to date to help students
14 resolve prior balances, cover tuition gaps, and
15 remove fees that stand in the way of enrollment.
16 Since its launch, CUNY Reconnect has served more than
17 71,000 adult learners across CUNY. The return on
18 investment for each degree earned is significant. 52
19 percent of these students are majoring in health
20 professions or STEM fields, and another 20 percent
21 are in business, putting these students on the path
to high-demand, high-wage careers. Many of these
students, beginning in fall 2025, are now eligible
for New York State Reconnect, which covers tuition,
fees, books, and supplies at our community colleges.
CUNY Reconnect has graduated almost 6,000 associate

3 degree students and over 7,000 bachelor's degree
4 students. Collectively, Reconnect students will earn
5 an estimated 16 billion more over their lifetimes
6 than with a high school diploma alone, strengthening
7 not only individual families, but New York City's
8 workforce and economy as a whole.

9 Thank you for your interest in this
10 important topic and commitment to expanding
11 opportunities for New Yorkers at every stage of life.
12 From middle school students stepping onto a college
13 campus for the first time, to high school students
14 earning both credits and wages, to working adults
15 completing degrees, CUNY is building an integrated
16 citywide workforce pipeline. Your support of CUNY's
17 efforts to scale and sustain these programs not only
18 transforms individual lives, but ensures that the
19 life-changing economic mobility higher education
20 provides is within reach for all New Yorkers.

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Good morning.

My name is Doug Lipari, and I'm the Executive
Director of the New York City Office of Talent and
Workforce Development, or NYC Talent for short. I'm
joined today by Leah Hebert, our Chief Policy and
Programs Officer, and Thwiba Eltom, our Director of

3 Apprenticeship and Accelerated Training from our Tech
4 Industry Partnership team. Thank you to the Members
5 of the New York City Council Committees on Workforce
6 Development and Higher Education, Workforce
7 Development Chair Won, Higher Education Chair Joseph,
8 for inviting us to testify today, and thank you to
9 Council and Speaker Menin for establishing the new
10 Committee on Workforce Development.

11 We think workforce development is more
12 important than ever, and we're thrilled that Council
13 has provided this avenue for collaboration. I want to
14 start off by introducing myself and the work of our
15 office, as my team and I may be new to many of you. I
16 joined NYC Talent in 2023, but I've been a public
17 servant in the City for over 10 years. Over this
18 time, I've seen that City government is at its best
19 when it works collaboratively, creatively, and in
20 partnership with New Yorkers and the organizations
21 that serve them. So that's the lens I bring to my
work here at NYC Talent, and I look forward to
working with you all to move our workforce strategy
and our city forward.

The public workforce ecosystem in New
York City is made up of more than 150 programs

3 administered by more than 30 different City agencies
4 and their many contracted providers. This includes
5 the City's core workforce agencies, like the
6 Department of Small Business Services, the Human
7 Resources Administration, and the Department of Youth
8 and Community Development, and of course, CUNY. While
9 each of these agencies focuses on its core mission in
10 service delivery, NYC Talent's mission is to work
11 with all partners across the system to ensure that
12 the City's workforce development strategy aligns with
13 job seeker needs, employer demand, and the changing
14 economy.

15 To effectively support New Yorkers, our
16 workforce development system must not only be
17 coordinated with higher education partners like CUNY,
18 but with numerous other public and private partners.
19 With NYC Public Schools, DYCD, and CUNY, NYC Talent
20 empowers young people with skills and knowledge to
21 access careers in their adulthood. We collaborate
with employers so that workforce programs offered by
the City are preparing for in-demand jobs, and we
work with partners like the City's Economic
Development Corporation and Department of City
Planning, so public economic development investments

3 lead to quality job opportunities for our residents.

4 We also work with human service providers and
5 agencies so that job seekers who face obstacles to
6 completing a training or obtaining a job have the
7 support they need to succeed.

8 Because of this complicated landscape,
9 coordination and collaboration are core to the work
10 we do through several specialized teams and strategic
11 initiatives. NYC Talent has industry partnerships in
12 healthcare, tech, and resilient infrastructure that
13 work to support equitable sector growth and align
14 workforce programming with employer demand. We have
15 an apprenticeship accelerator that expands
16 opportunities for New Yorkers to learn while they
17 earn. We launched community hiring, which works to
18 make sure that the City's contract spending expands
19 access to career pathways for low-income communities.
20 We also have dedicated expertise to make sure that
21 New Yorkers who face particular barriers, including
young people, people with disabilities, and older
adults, are better served by the workforce system.

 A clear example of our evidence-based,
systems-level approach to workforce development is in
our ongoing work on the Action Plan for Young Adult

3 Career Success. This strategic plan, developed with
4 CUNY, Public Schools, and DYCD in 2023, is built on
5 two truths. First, we know that there is considerable
6 overlap across the young people that participate in
7 City services among the city's 900,000 public school
8 students, 400,000 CUNY students, and 100,000 young
9 people enrolled in Summer Youth Employment Program
10 each year. It is only practical that we coordinate to
11 maximize our public investments in young people
12 across organizational boundaries. This is done in
13 recognition of a second important truth. Just like
14 many of us here relied on a series of education,
15 training, and social experiences to get where we are
16 today, the workforce system needs to provide New
17 Yorkers with a series of interrelated experiences to
18 find career success.

19 To build these opportunities for success,
20 the Youth Action Plan prioritized strategies that
21 included career-connected learning, career
exploration opportunities, and paid work experiences.
In plainer language, we want to make sure that young
people have opportunities both in and out of the
classroom to learn about career possibilities,
acquire relevant skills, and experience what it's

3 like to work, preferably while getting paid. In even
4 plainer words, you can't be what you can't see so we
5 work to maximize exposure to these new opportunities.
6 These strategies not only achieve more equitable
7 outcomes when preparing young people for work, but
8 also help them build the sort of social capital and
9 networks that support any of us throughout our
10 careers and lives.

11 The Youth Action Plan has delivered
12 initiatives like Exploring Futures, which in Fiscal
13 Year 2025 provided 37,000 middle school students in
14 over 470 DYCD after-school programs with
15 opportunities for career exposure, CUNY college
16 visits, and support with high school applications.
17 The Youth Action Plan also informed many of the
18 initiatives CUNY highlighted in their testimony, like
19 Career Ready, Work, Learn, Grow, and Future Ready
20 NYC, and we're proud to partner with community to
21 better serve New York City's young people. While
these initiatives are administered by our agency
partners, we at NYC Talent help innovate, coordinate,
identify funding opportunities, and advocate to
ensure ongoing progress towards our shared goals.

3 Beyond these specific areas of
4 collaboration, NYC Talent are longstanding partners
5 in building a workforce system that advances economic
6 justice. NYC Talent supports CUNY efforts to help
7 students access opportunities to develop in-demand
8 skills, acquire relevant work experience, and access
9 supportive networks to maximize the value of their
10 time at CUNY. One particular area of important
11 collaboration is the City's CUNY 2X Tech program,
12 which was launched in 2017 by our office in
13 partnership with CUNY and SBS. CUNY 2X Tech increases
14 the number of CUNY students who graduate with tech
15 degrees and better positions them to attain jobs in
16 the city's competitive and dynamic tech sector. It
17 does this by hiring new computer science faculty,
18 scaling curriculum innovations that are informed by
19 industry and led by faculty experts, hiring new
20 academic tech advisors for classroom to career
21 advising, and by enhancing opportunities for
experiential paid work-based learning. Since its
launch, CUNY 2X Tech has reached over 15,000 students
and scaled to 11 campuses, including an expansion to
community colleges for the first time in 2024 at
Borough of Manhattan, LaGuardia, and Guttman. CUNY 2X

3 Tech's success helped the City realize the positive
4 impacts that more career advising, internships, and
5 industry-experienced faculty had on the outcome of
6 CUNY students.

7 This success informed how NYC Talent
8 supported the subsequent launch of the CUNY Inclusive
9 Economy, CIE, initiative, launched in 2022. CIE
10 expands internship and job opportunities for
11 students, builds stronger relationships between
12 industry professionals and CUNY campuses, and
13 enhances CUNY's career development capacities in key
14 sectors like healthcare, infrastructure, and
15 business. In Fiscal Year 2024, CIE programming scaled
16 across 15 departments and eight CUNY campuses,
17 serving 1,400 students. Students who attended just
18 one career advising session made possible by this CIE
19 initiative were twice as likely to secure a job
20 opportunity compared to their non-participant
21 counterparts, with full-time jobs secured after
graduation paying an average of more than 65,000
dollars per year.

22 We're proud of CIE's success, and more so
23 that the launch of CUNY Beyond in October of 2025
24 continues to build on this strategic vision. Where

3 CIE is department-based, CUNY Beyond expands these
4 workforce best practices into a campus-wide model,
5 which will embed these proven tools across all the
6 college's academic programs. These efforts are
7 emblematic of how the City is effectively aligning,
8 piloting, evaluating, and scaling impactful workforce
9 and higher education strategies to better support New
10 Yorkers.

11 In addition to the work I've outlined,
12 NYC Talent collaborates with CUNY on programs for New
13 Yorkers who are not seeking a degree. This includes
14 the CUNY Nurse Fellowship Academy, launched in 2025
15 with SBS, which prepares the workers needed to teach
16 the next generation of nurses, an early childhood
17 educator apprenticeship program at CUNY's
18 Professional Development Institute that supports
19 advancement opportunities for these critical
20 caregivers. We also work with CUNY to increase
21 pathways to public sector careers. Through a
partnership with our office, CUNY, and the Department
of Citywide Administrative Services, the City
launched the Civil Service Pathways Fellowship. This
program recruits CUNY graduates into two-year
fellowships with City agencies, leading to a

3 permanent civil service title. We're currently
4 working with our partners to expand and unlock new
5 public sector pathways to support public school
6 students and CUNY students.

7 As you can see, NYC Talent works to
8 coordinate and scale change across the city's
9 workforce system, including in partnership with CUNY.
10 Therefore, many of the themes from the Center for an
11 Urban Future's recent workforce report are well
12 aligned with our work. Perhaps most importantly, NYC
13 Talent and CUF are in complete alignment that
14 workforce development is an important part of the
15 affordability agenda and a key strategy for achieving
16 economic mobility.

17 To that end, our office, in partnership
18 with the New York City Workforce Development Board,
19 which oversees the City's federal workforce funding,
20 has been engaged in strategic planning since
21 mid-2025. This effort has incorporated labor market
data, insights directly from job seekers, and
feedback from over 200 public and private
stakeholders, including training providers,
community-based organizations, educational
institutions, labor unions, businesses, philanthropy,

3 and government. We aim to use the diverse
4 perspectives of this expansive coalition to recommend
5 enhancements to our workforce system so it is more
6 effective, connected, and resilient.

7 There is no denying that our economy and
8 job market have undergone significant changes in the
9 last several years. Too many New Yorkers are facing a
10 high cost of living in a labor market where access to
11 quality employment is increasingly competitive. But
12 New Yorkers do not have to face this challenge alone.
13 NYC Talent, CUNY, and many partners across the city,
14 including our Deputy Mayor for Economic Justice,
15 Julie Su, are working together to deliver a workforce
16 development strategy that is agile,
17 industry-informed, and inclusive so all New Yorkers
18 can access quality jobs and have dignity in the
19 workplace.

20 Thank you for your time, and we look
21 forward to your partnership and questions.

CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

I'd like to recognize Council Member
Wong.

Thank you. Thank you so much for that.

3 First question. How often do CUNY
4 administrators or professors meet with New York City
5 Talent to align their curriculum with current labor
6 market trends, and what does the process look like?

7 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Sure. So, in
8 addition to meeting with our colleagues at NYC
9 Talent, the infrastructure that we've invested in
10 through CUNY Inclusive Economy together means that
11 there are industry specialists who are embedded at
12 the academic level. So, these conversations are
13 happening continuously, and that's really important,
14 and by design, because the workforce evolves so
15 quickly. With AI being deployed, companies themselves
16 are, from month to month, figuring out what that
17 workforce skill looks like, that we can't rely on a
18 series of meetings on a regular cadence to actually
19 give us all the information we need. Instead,
20 industry has to be working together hand-in-hand with
21 faculty and others and staff to be able to deploy the
most recent insights into the classroom. So, we do
that in a couple of different ways. The CUNY
Inclusive Economy is one example, but CUNY Beyond
actually invests in a number of different investments
to make sure that's happening. First of all, we

3 invest in integrated academic and career advisement,
4 which uses tools that include the latest sort of
5 career milestones and information that's relevant to
6 specific disciplines for every single student.

7 Additionally, the CUNY Beyond initiative has a pillar
8 on career-connected learning, where we are regularly
9 equipping faculty with the insights they need to be
10 able to integrate career insights into the classroom.

11 And then through employer engagement, we do have
12 these regular touch points where industry specialists
13 are embedded in departments building consistent
14 relationships with employers. Because the way that
15 curriculum evolves look really different in some
16 disciplines versus others, and so you really need a
17 hyper-local approach to that work.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So, the engagement
19 is ongoing, is that what you're telling me,
20 constantly as the market is changing?

21 What's the biggest trend that you're
seeing now in talking to folks in the labor market
right now?

VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Sure. Well,
certainly AI is impacting every single sector of the
economy, and it is changing so rapidly that it is

3 requiring an ongoing conversation amongst many, many,
4 many different disciplines. The thing about AI is
5 that it is creating an environment where it is not
6 only essential that we are making sure that
7 information and skills are updated on a regular
8 basis, but is even speaking to more value of ensuring
9 that our degree programs are giving students the
10 opportunity to apply something. As students can find
11 facts through ChatGPT, the thing they're not going to
12 be able to do on their own versus through a college
13 degree is actually get a foot in the door somewhere
14 to apply those skills. And so we're really thinking
15 about not only how we ensure that students are
16 equipped with the latest information on AI and how to
17 use it to be able to enhance their own work and
18 perspectives, but also making sure that they have the
19 opportunity to be on the job applying things because
20 in this world in which AI is making it more difficult
21 to enter into entry-level jobs, that's going to be a
differentiating factor is their applied experience.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So basically, are
19 you also teaching them how to integrate it into that
20 new career that whatever, for example, teaching, I'm

3 biased to that. So, is that being taught and how to
4 integrate it into, let's say, a teacher?

5 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Yes,
6 absolutely. So, there are two approaches we're taking
7 to ensuring that AI is integrated into students'
8 educational pathways. One is by working very closely
9 with industry, and we've partnered with many
10 companies, including EY, JPMC, Amazon, et cetera, to
11 launch a series of workshops that are actually taught
12 by industry because it's evolving so quickly that we
13 need practitioners who are doing it daily to be the
14 ones who are teaching students. Those are open to
15 every single major, and in fact, there's a priority
16 on students who are not advanced AI practitioners,
17 who are not necessarily coming from computer science,
18 who are coming from other disciplines, to be able to
19 participate in those non-credit-bearing workshops
20 that industry is offering. Additionally, the second
21 part of our approach is really to support departments
in integrating this information. Right now, we have
many, many faculty across CUNY who are working to be
able to integrate insights into even general ed
courses, but they're working in isolation, not always
with the support they need. Our Office of Academic

3 Affairs and our Dean of Technology and Computing is
4 working with departments to ensure that there's a
5 support structure for them to be able to integrate
6 AI, no matter if it's education or biological
7 sciences.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay. Thank you. I
9 have another question. Pathways and Exclusive
10 Economy, an action plan for young adult career
11 success offers five goals, many of which are directly
12 relevant to the work that CUNY does in preparing its
13 students for workforce. One of the goals is to expand
14 career-connected early learning at every stage of a
15 young person's journey, including looking at
16 career-related academics, advising, career
17 exploration, work-based learning, internship, and
18 apprenticeship. We want this in every entry point for
19 the student's journey in your institution or coming
20 to you.

21 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Yes, correct. I
don't know if you all want to comment a little bit on
this?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Yeah, of
course. So, the action plan was a great partnership,
and I think to echo Vice Chancellor Anderson's point

3 of how much we work with CUNY, it is constantly,
4 we're in constant communication. And I say the Youth
5 Action Plan is emblematic of that partnership, not
6 just with CUNY, but with Public Schools and DYCD. And
7 so in 2023, that's when we had the action plan, and
8 that work has been ongoing since then. And so,
9 career-connected learning has been a key part of that
10 Exploring Futures program, as was mentioned in
11 testimony, is a great example of that program, of the
12 partnership across the city.

13 CHIEF HEBERT: And then I'll just add to
14 that, New York City Public Schools has really
15 embedded career-connected learning as a key
16 fundamental across over 300 high schools. So Future
17 Ready NYC is one big piece of it that includes
18 advising, work-based learning, financial literacy,
19 and making sure that young people have post-secondary
20 pathways and a plan in addition to work-based
21 learning. There's also the career and technical
education programs, there's Learning to Work. We've
done a lot with CUNY and DYCD to expand the
school-based SYEP as well. And then what we're
finding in the data points that New York City Public
Schools has put together through their key

3 implementation metrics is that it's really having a
4 great impact on young people. There's increased
5 attendance for young people going to school. There's
6 also higher GPAs, they're less likely to be
7 chronically absent. But I think most importantly,
8 it's just really reinforcing learning for young
9 people and how that's connected to careers,
10 reinforcing their love of learning and what they want
11 to do, helping them find agency in what their career
12 pathway is, and also just to be able to increase
13 their own academic achievement.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON WON: Can you expand on the
15 Future Ready program? So, you mentioned there's 197
16 career pathways with two to three course sequences
17 for in-demand jobs. So, can you help me understand
18 some of the 197 career pathways on the courses with
19 examples of the broader areas they cover? And can you
20 help me understand the year-to-year, what the costs
21 have been for this program, and what the increases
have been, if any?

DEAN SOONACHAN: Sure. So, the number of
pathways is so high because the high schools
participate, and so there's 179 high schools that
participate, and most of those schools are offering

3 multiple pathways so that's where you get that larger
4 number. There's 11 different industry fields that
5 each high school can choose from. So, for example, in
6 healthcare, we have pre-diagnostic medicine,
7 pre-nursing, or an EMT pathway. In technology, we
8 have cybersecurity analysts, data scientists, or a
9 software developer. There's HVAC and decarbonization,
10 and our green pathway, human and social services, and
11 two business pathways. Within each of those pathways,
12 a high school student would take a sequence of
13 courses that would begin to introduce them to that
14 career and that major, and then go deeper into that
15 over the course of the next two course sequences. And
16 that would happen alongside what Leah just described
17 with developing opportunities for work-based
18 learning, perhaps pursuing a relevant credential in
19 that field, financial literacy, and other college and
20 career advising. We share the cost of Future Ready
21 with New York City Public Schools, particularly on
the CUNY side, the costs are in the instruction of
those college courses.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON WON: So, what is the
20 estimated cost year-to-year, and what has been the

3 increase in funding year-to-year for the last four
4 years?

5 DEAN SOONACHAN: I would have to get back
6 to you on the overall cost of Future Ready. A whole
7 set of those services are on the public school side,
8 and it's funded through them so I don't have the
9 budget dollars for that.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON WON: What I'm trying to
11 understand is, how has the program expanded
12 year-to-year for the last four years? Have you seen
13 an increase in students being part of this Pathways
14 Program? And for the career pathways, who are the
15 partners that do it, other than the public schools?
16 Because there has to be some sort of industry partner
17 that are part of this with you.

18 DEAN SOONACHAN: Yes. Public Schools has a
19 robust team that engages industry partners to create
20 work-based learning opportunities at the high
21 schools. CUNY, for this initiative, doesn't manage
the employer partnerships, but they are in place for
all of the participating high schools. The initiative
has grown through additional funding that Public
Schools has gotten, and on the CUNY side, we've
really engaged in what are the ways that we can work

2 hand-in-hand with our partner high schools to
3 increase awareness and engagement for all families.

4 So, we do a lot of deep work on, for example,
5 customized emails that go out to caregivers and
6 students, letting them know, did you know you could
7 take a free CUNY course while you're still in high
8 school, making it really easy and seamless for them
9 to enroll, and then partnering with the high schools
10 on really integrated college and career advising.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON WON: So, am I
12 understanding correctly that there has been no
13 increase in funding from CUNY for this program? Only
14 from the Public Schools, from the New York City
15 Public Schools?

16 DEAN SOONACHAN: Both CUNY and Public
17 Schools have contributed increased dollars to
18 increase the amount of college courses that we're
19 offering. I don't have the budget amount for the full
20 Future Ready initiative, which, again, happens a lot
21 of those other pieces happen on the Public Schools
side.

CO-CHAIRPERSON WON: And do you have the
numbers, the metrics of how many students have now
increased year to year for this program?

3 DEAN SOONACHAN: Yes. In my testimony, I
4 gave you the number for Future Ready that have
5 participated. I think we're on track this year for
6 10,000 students in Future Ready this year. Last year,
7 it was about 7,500.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON WON: Okay.

9 DEAN SOONACHAN: And that's in the CUNY
10 credit-bearing course component of the initiative. So
11 Public Schools, again, would have even larger number,
12 looking at the entire student population of all of
13 those Future Ready high schools.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON WON: Okay. Because what
15 I'm trying to understand is what the funding model
16 should be for this program, for it to increase so
17 that we could have more students, as well as more
18 funding for this program to grow. Because even within
19 the, I think, within the coursework that you had
20 named for the pathways, even for technology, those
21 three that you named, they're not covering majority
of the industry's current workforce of what the
possibilities are within technology? Because you only
said you only have three pathways or software
development.

3 DEAN SOONACHAN: Yeah. I think we would
4 welcome a conversation along with our Public Schools
5 partners on what the growth plan would be for the
6 program and what the cost would be to continue to
7 expand it.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON WON: Thank you.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

10 Along those lines, as you mentioned
11 earlier, anyone who's in P-TECH program, college now,
12 early college, they're saving billions and billions
13 of dollars by leaving school with college credits or
14 some of them with an associate and a high school
15 diploma at the same time so definitely would love to
16 see how we can expand on that.

17 Another goal in the Inclusive Economy
18 Action Plan is to expand early intervention to ensure
19 youth and young adults remain connected to pathways
20 and are supported during transition from school to
21 post-secondary work, including supporting from
programs designed to improve retention rate,
completion rate of college students, as well as
improve transition into workforce upon graduation.
And that's one of the things when we looked at the
data, we saw that a lot of our young people leave

3 high school. They don't stay. How do we get them to
4 stay? How do we provide the support? And as you may
5 know, a lot of them are first time college students
6 who they're first to go to college. They're immigrant
7 students. How do we provide those supports, not just
8 when they get to college, but before they get there?

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: So, I think
10 this is an example of the partnership that we have at
11 DYCD, Public Schools, and CUNY is making sure that
12 we're thinking of the young people not just as, you
13 know, one their point in time, but as a whole person
14 who has ideas, dreams, goals, et cetera. And so we
15 want to make sure that we're working with students at
16 every stage and that we're thinking about what their
17 future is. One of the things that is particularly
18 exciting that our office partnered with multiple
19 partners across the city is creating a new civil
20 service youth apprenticeship title, and that is
21 leveraging public school students, or not leveraging,
sorry. Having public school students have access to
have apprenticeship experiences in City agencies and
an apprenticeship, meaning it is paid. It is a job,
right, and it has a pathway to a career. And we
actually in our office have two apprentices who are

3 here today. I don't want to call them out too much.

4 But Kayla and Emily are great youth apprentices here.

5 And programs like this are one, giving that, like I

6 said in my testimony, you can't be what you can't see

7 so giving exposure to what it's like to work for the

8 City, but also making sure that they are informing

9 the work that we're doing, and that informs the work

10 across our entire office. And perhaps most excitingly

11 is that many of these students, we're in year three

12 of the program now. Many students, they start in

13 their junior year, senior now are in college. And so

14 many of their students go on to CUNY, right? And so

15 we want to make sure that we have a system, whether

16 they're experiencing something through SYEP, there's

17 a touch point or any of the programs throughout the

18 city, that there's awareness and education around not

19 just what is right here in front of you, but what is

20 beyond it next, and so that's a really strong

21 connection there.

CHIEF HEBERT: And if I can add, in terms

of transitions, CUNY and Public Schools have really

done a lot in terms of innovation in reaching young

people early. So, I don't know if you want to talk

about the CUNY welcome letters, but really welcoming

3 young people when they're eligible to go to CUNY to
4 make sure that they know that and have that
5 information. And CUNY's also created college and
6 career bridge programs that help young people both
7 when they're applying for college, but then also
8 making sure that they matriculate as freshmen. And we
9 just know that the impact that peers have on other
10 young people is tremendous. And then I would also, if
11 our colleagues want to, I mean, the CUNY Inclusive
12 Economy and CUNY Beyond are also looking at those
13 transitions to make sure that CUNY students are able
14 to engage in the labor market as early as possible
15 while they are in college so they can have a
16 transition into the labor market afterwards.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And all that is
18 being communicated at the high school level as well,
19 that CUNY is a pipeline, this is your handoff?

20 DEAN SOONACHAN: Yeah, sure. I'm happy to
21 talk about that work that Leah mentioned that's
really about making sure earlier and earlier that
students understand that the first day of high school
is really the first step towards post-secondary and
career. So, in our Future Ready high schools, we're
taking ninth graders on college tours, for example,

3 then building through college coursework, that sense
4 that they truly already are a college student. And
5 again, tens of thousands of students are earning
6 those CUNY credits while they are still in high
7 school. And then at the fall of their senior year,
8 they're getting a welcome letter customized via email
9 to themselves and their caregivers. We're even
10 pulling in the information we already have about
11 those students if they've earned CUNY credits already
12 and what we know about their high school GPA to say,
13 this is the set of CUNY colleges that we encourage
14 you to apply to. We have really great outcomes in
15 terms of students receiving and caregivers receiving
16 those emails, clicking them open and clicking
17 directly into the CUNY application. Then in May of
18 senior year, every single New York City public high
19 school senior is going to get a text message from
20 their assigned CUNY college and career coach. These
21 are several hundred CUNY students who've gone through
an intensive training in all aspects of financial aid
and matriculation and registration who are then
assigned to groups of high school seniors to reach
out. And again, we're really leveraging what we
already know about those students to say, hey, you've

3 put in an application to BMCC but we see you haven't
4 yet finished financial aid or you haven't yet
5 confirmed your registration. How can we help? We find
6 that the highest response rates to those texts are
7 the students who are low income, who are going to be
8 the first in their families to go to college or from
9 underrepresented minority groups. They have much
10 higher response rates, and we see that we've closed
11 that sort of gap in summer melt that those students
12 respond and then actually are about seven percentage
13 points more likely to then show up on their college
14 campus in the fall than peers with similar
15 backgrounds who did not engage with their coach.
16 Speaking to what Leah was really referencing about
17 the power of that near peer work.

18 CHIEF HEBERT: And then the other, I
19 think, important transition is from middle school to
20 high school. And so with the high school selection
21 process, young people are making these decisions with
themselves, with their families, with their schools
at 11 years old, and so making sure that young
people, as we know too from research, that
self-identity starts to form at that age, that they
are exposed to as much as possible, both in terms of

3 careers, in terms of post-secondary pathways and the
4 middle school visits through Community Explorers, but
5 then also thinking about career, I mean, high school,
6 so the different high school opportunities, whether
7 it's Future Ready or CTE and getting that exposure.
8 And some of the innovations that our high school
9 apprentices, now college apprentices, worked with us
10 on is making sure that we were setting up high school
11 panels and having that peer-to-peer network. And so
12 we had a series of events where we were able to work
13 with young people in Summer Rising and then now after
14 school through DYCD programs to be able to talk to
15 other young people in high school to see what it's
16 like to go through the different career programs
17 there.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

19 I'd like to take a moment to recognize
20 Council Member Restler.

21 So, another goal of your Inclusive
Economy Plan is to improve data collection and
analytic to support stronger transition to promote
continuous improvement and to ensure that we address
historic educational employment disparities. What
specifically is CUNY doing to improve data collection

3 and analysis? I love data collection so I'm always...
4 that drives my work so I would love to hear.

5 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Thank you for
6 the question. We do too. So that's great.

7 What we've noticed over the last decade
8 is that efforts to invest in career success of
9 students are happening in very small pockets in very
10 different places. The data collection is not
11 necessarily systematized and connected. And that
12 really needs to change for us to understand all of
13 the different touch points that a student has with
14 interventions that can help them actually move
15 through their degree into a job. So, we've done a
16 couple of things to be able to improve that sort of
17 tool. The first is we are working very closely
18 through CUNY Beyond to lay out a set of metrics that
19 we understand to be not just the KPIs that are laid
20 out in our strategic plan, but also the leading
21 indicators that help to drive student attainment of
career success, things like how often did you meet
with an integrated academic and career advisement, or
what kinds of career connected courses are you
enrolling in? From there, we are building, we have a
prototype of it but are working to expand it, a

3 dashboard that connects this information to outcomes
4 data. So, we rely largely on the wage record system
5 that the State Department of Labor has that can
6 provide us with the outcomes, the employment outcomes
7 of students within the State of New York who stay
8 here in New York. And to date, those two systems have
9 not been connected, like our programmatic databases
10 and that wage record database. So, what we've done is
11 pulled them together into one place. And through CUNY
12 Beyond, which sort of provides us with this holistic
13 five-pillar approach to helping campuses scale up
14 these practices, we're going to be able to connect
15 each of these practices to outcomes, which is
16 something that I think will be a really valuable
17 tool.

18 CHIEF HEBERT: And then I would just add
19 that through NYC Public Schools, and they have the
20 key implementation metrics that really is, it's
21 partnering with New Visions for Public Schools, but
really the intention there is to be able to get
information to adults that are helping these young
people navigate their different career pathways to be
able to help them with that support.

CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

3 Council Member Cabán.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you. Can you
5 hear me?

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yes. Loud and
7 clear.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Awesome. I
9 apologize if it's a little loud. I am sitting waiting
10 for a tow because I've got a couple of flat tires,
11 but I didn't want to miss the opportunity to talk to
12 y'all.

13 So, I wanted to ask specifically about
14 NYC Talent and, Chairs, I can't see the clock, so
15 please tell me when I've gone over time. Can you just
16 tell me what you do with the data that you collect
17 from the agencies? And again, this is specific for
18 NYC Talent.

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Yeah, sure.

20 So, we have industry partnerships that are dedicated
21 across the tech sector, healthcare, sustainable
infrastructure, and those teams work with industry,
which includes the employers, the labor, and the
entities that serve New Yorkers, right, to connect
them to jobs, so the City agencies that do this work.
Those teams also work very closely with our Data and

3 Impact Team. And so our Data and Impact Team is
4 keeping an eye on labor market data and with between
5 the hard data, the conversations with the employers,
6 and that is done through roundtables, constant
7 communication of being able to see what is happening
8 now, right, what are the needs now, what are going to
9 be the needs tomorrow, and then helping inform how
10 programming is delivered to the New Yorkers through
11 the programming that gets done at the agency level.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: How many staff do
13 you have?

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: We have 37
15 staff and three apprentices.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: And do you
17 currently have any staff for the Center for Youth
18 Employment?

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Yes.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: How many is that?

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: We have one
staff.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Okay. Just one.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Correct.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: What is your total
4 office budget? And out of that, how much have you
5 raised in private funding?

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: So, like I
7 mentioned in my testimony, the workforce system is
8 very, very large, and it's strewn across 30 or so
9 City agencies. There's 150 or more programs. And so
10 much of the work that we do, and then much of the
11 funding is at the City agencies. Our office,
12 ourselves, we have a fairly small program budget
13 because we help inform how City spend is delivered
14 across the City agencies.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Do you have a
16 number for that? And again, how much have you guys
17 raised in private funding? Because my understanding
18 is you do private fundraising as well.

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Yeah. So, in
20 FY27, our program budget is approximately 2.7 million
21 dollars. And we have raised, I don't know if I have
the exact dollar amount with respect to private
funding tied to fiscal year, but we have raised some
private funding, including funding that is supporting
a lot of the work around our office.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: It'd be good to get
4 an update on the amount of that private funding
5 because I am also interested in, and I'm probably not
6 the only one, but of the amount raised in private
7 funding, for example, and then the overall funding
8 that you guys get, how much was from your office
9 directly versus was raised by each agency? I think
10 those are good points of information.

11 But on the policy research and
12 programming side of things, what's happening with
13 Community Hiring?

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Yeah. So,
15 Community Hiring is a very exciting initiative.
16 Couple of years ago, we were able to get State
17 legislation that authorized us to set workforce goals
18 on City contracts. So that means if you're a City
19 vendor doing business with the City, and that cuts
20 across construction contracts, human services,
21 professional services, standard services, you will
need to have goals on your contract, and you will be
required to make best efforts to hire low-income New
Yorkers, including NYCHA residents. And so that
program had to get, we had a whole rulemaking
process, and that went into effect, and then it's

3 tied to City contracts, and so it's very exciting
4 that it's up and running. We have over 200
5 procurements out already on the street. Many of those
6 contracts are just beginning now to come online in
7 terms of the, went through the full procurement
8 process, was released, awarded, registered. And so
9 those contracts are coming online now, and we're
10 excited to make sure that we are connecting New
11 Yorkers to those job opportunities, and that the
12 businesses who do business with the City, they are
13 coming to the workforce system, the public workforce
14 system, that we're increasing the quantity and the
15 quality of jobs that enter the workforce system. So,
16 we're really excited to be able to connect New
17 Yorkers, particularly the low-income New Yorkers
18 where there will be workforce goals, on to employment
19 opportunities with vendors who get contracts. And the
20 scale is enormous, right? City spend, as we all know,
21 is huge. And so, we think once fully implemented, the
community hiring program across the mayoral agencies
can be around upwards of 20 billion dollars a year.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you, Chairs.

4 Can I get just 20 more seconds to ask a couple of
5 that point?

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Go ahead, 20
7 seconds, go.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you.

9 Okay, great. So, these are my questions.
10 How do you share the labor market information with
11 agencies, and how often does that happen? Because I
12 want to know, you know, do you support agencies with
13 research? Do you directly produce reports? And is
14 that done by staff or consultants? Those are my
15 questions. And thank you.

16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Thank you,
17 Council Member.

18 Yeah. So, we have a relatively new Data
19 and Impact Team, and so we are working very closely
20 internally with all of our teams across the industry
21 partnerships, the teams that serve people with
disabilities, young people, to make sure that they
have the information that they need, and we also
share that information with agencies. And so we will
be doing more of this work over the coming year. We
know that we want to be out there talking to

3 employers, analyzing data, and making sure that that
4 information gets out to, one, the public where
5 appropriate, of course, as well as to all the City
6 agencies that we are helping inform the way that
7 services are provided. I will also say that our
8 office staffs, as I mentioned in my testimony, the
9 New York City Workforce Development Board, and so we
10 work very closely with the Board, which is a
11 business-led Board, to share information with them
12 that they can have to help inform their oversight of
13 the City's federal funding.

14 DIRECTOR ELTOM: And just adding to that,
15 that in the CUNY 2X program that we manage, all of
16 the curriculum design is informed by industry, and we
17 bring those insights from labor market research and
18 employer insights to just identify what is the
19 current in-demand skills and emerging trends and we
20 bring that to the faculty that we work with. So, for
21 every CUNY 2X school, we do do that regularly, mostly
like every quarter, to kind of go and review that.
And we make sure that everything that their students
are receiving, our career-connected learning, that is
brought by those insights from the labor market
research and also employers.

3 CHIEF HEBERT: And then I would just add,
4 too, that our New York City Public Schools has
5 different industry commissions. And our industry
6 partnerships sit on those industry commissions and
7 share labor market intelligence that they're hearing
8 from the field, as well as data.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And do you share
10 that data? There's usually a disconnect among
11 agencies, which I find is huge, and I just wish
12 agencies would start talking to each other so the
13 work can be done not in silos, but in collaboration.

14 CHIEF HEBERT: We agree.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay.

16 Council Member Won.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON WON: Thank you so much.
18 The Green Economy Action Plan mentions leveraging 600
19 million dollars in investments for Youth Pathways.
20 How much of that 6 million has actually been
21 allocated to CUNY to date, and how much to other
entities? What has been the impact?

VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Sure. Thank you
for the question. The Green Economy Action Plan
included support for the development of both offshore
wind and broader renewable energy and green economy

3 occupations by providing over 10 million dollars in
4 capital for investments at CUNY campuses to help
5 improve workforce preparation. We launched a
6 competitive process amongst our campuses and
7 identified eight projects, including a net zero
8 house, a decarbonization lab, and numerous other
9 investments to be able to ensure that we have the
10 actual spaces and places for students to be able to
11 learn the skills they need for these in-demand
12 occupations. These are across six campuses, Bronx
13 Community College, Brooklyn, College of Staten
14 Island, Medgar Evers, City Tech, and Queensborough.
15 So, those are in process right now.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON WON: Okay. One idea in the
17 CUF report is to make bold new investments in
18 workforce development through a New York City Talent
19 and Development Fund, a Career Impact Bond, a
20 Workforce AI Readiness Fund, or by tapping funds from
21 rezoning, significantly increasing flexible
outcomes-driven City funding, and creating new
mechanisms to scale what works. What is your opinion
of this idea, whether it would be effective to boost
workforce development in New York City?

3 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: So, like I
4 mentioned in my testimony, the workforce system is
5 very big here in New York. I'm very proud of the size
6 and scale and appreciate CUF's lifting up workforce
7 development as being core to the work of the
8 affordability agenda. And, you know, what was
9 mentioned in the testimony, I talked a little bit
10 about the Workforce Development Board, which oversees
11 federal funding. That is about like 90 million
12 dollars a year. Workforce development funding in the
13 city is around 800 million dollars. So there already
14 is enormous City investment. You know, many cities,
15 states across the country rely solely on federal
16 investment. So, there is already considerable
17 investment in City investment in the system. I do
18 think that a lot of the ideas of the CUF report are
19 aligned with the work of our office of how do we
20 effectively use that funding, efficiently use that
21 funding, and coordinate across this huge system,
right? Like you mentioned, Chair Joseph, we want to
make sure that everyone is talking to each other,
right? And so that's really core to the work of our
office, to make sure that what is happening, whether
it's with the youth side, on the adult side, talking

3 to those groups together, to making sure that that
4 funding is effectively used.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON WON: So, another idea in
6 the CUF report is to establish an economic mobility
7 cabinet and workforce czar in City Hall to elevate
8 workforce development inside City government,
9 coordinate workforce policies across agencies, and
10 hold the system accountable for results. What is your
11 opinion of this idea, whether it would work
12 effectively to boost workforce development in New
13 York City?

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: So, I will
15 say, you know, I'm incredibly excited to be under the
16 leadership of Deputy Mayor for Economic Justice,
17 Julie Su. You know, in my mind, she is essentially
18 our workforce development czar. She has an incredible
19 amount of experience between her time in California
20 as the head of the Department of Labor, as well as
21 being the acting head of the United States Department
of Labor. And so, we have right now, at the highest
level of City government, a real strong advocate of
this work, of the work that we're doing. And in our
office, we help coordinate the system, right? We help
understand what's happening across those 30-some-odd

3 agencies, help coordinate, help escalate, help
4 elevate, help be efficient stewards of the City's
5 workforce funding, and so I'm very excited about
6 having the leadership of the Deputy Mayor to help
7 champion that work, and I'm happy that CUF recognizes
8 that workforce development is important and proud of
9 the work of our office.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON WON: How is CUNY Inclusive
11 Economy Initiative different from New York City
12 Talents Program on Career Pathways and its
13 Apprenticeship Accelerator? Is there a competition
14 for graduates or overlap between the programs?

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: So, no. I
16 think a lot of these things are in alignment and are
17 well-synched, and so our Apprenticeship Accelerator
18 team, in fact, actually has an apprenticeship program
19 that is at the CUNY Professional Development
20 Institute, and so that's a really exciting
21 opportunity for building up early childhood
educators. And so that's one example where we are
working hand in hand with CUNY. And I think a lot of
the work of our office generally is to help New
Yorkers, and I can't think of anything more New York
than CUNY. And so, if we are helping CUNY, we are

3 helping New York City, and that's really core to the
4 work that we do.

5 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: If I could just
6 illustrate how these things work together. So, across
7 CUNY, as part of the City's commitment on
8 apprenticeships, we run something called college
9 apprenticeships, which are the last semester of our
10 applied associates degrees are converted into
11 apprenticeships. So, they're credit-bearing time that
12 students spend on the job with the intention of
13 converting those into full-time employment. We have
14 about 17 AAS programs that have the last semester
15 serve as this kind of apprenticeship. When we first
16 started to do this work with employers, we went out
17 to students in AAS programs, which are designed to
18 move directly into the workforce. They are not meant
19 to transfer. They're just meant to go straight in.
20 And we offered to students, hey, we know you're
21 majoring in these degree programs. We know your
intention is to move straight into the workforce.
Apply for this apprenticeship program. We've made all
these amazing partnerships with employers so that you
can move straight into the job, and only 14 percent
of eligible students applied. And when we reached out

3 to them to say, you know, this is what you're coming
4 here for. Why wouldn't you apply to this? What they
5 said was we thought this was sent to us in error. We
6 didn't think these companies wanted us to be the
7 candidates to work in these places. What that speaks
8 to is there needs to be a consistent drumbeat,
9 consistent channel of advice, consistently reinforced
10 message that these are the pathways and opportunities
11 that are available to all of our students for the
12 careers that they want to pursue. And that requires
13 investments like the integrated advisors that we make
14 through CUNY Inclusive Economy to be able to
15 reinforce and ensure that students are taking
16 advantage of these other opportunities.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON WON: Okay. My next
18 question is, can you speak to the Workforce
19 Development Board's management of the Workforce
20 Innovation and Opportunity Act funding? It's our
21 understanding that historically it's been between 60
million to 100 million per year. Is there still the
case under the current federal administration? And
can you break down how those funding is being spent?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Sure. So, as I
mentioned, our office staffs the Workforce

3 Development Board, and it is a federally mandated
4 board and in alignment with, like you said, Chair,
5 the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, WIOA.
6 And so that money comes to the City. It's based on
7 formula funding, which includes a variety of factors.
8 And so, like you said, it does vary over time, but
9 this year is about 87 million dollars. And so,
10 generally speaking, that money is served through
11 Department of Small Business Services, SBS. They
12 serve the adult workforce and then the Department of
13 Youth and Community Development, DYCD, for the youth
14 services. And so that money comes in and, you know,
15 the Workforce One centers that you are familiar with
16 that operate by SBS are run through WIOA. And so,
17 primarily, it's through those two channels that the
18 money is being spent.

19 And I will say that, as I mentioned in my
20 testimony, we just did a strategic planning process,
21 or we're in the middle of a strategic planning
22 process that was in partnership with the Workforce
23 Development Board that was looking at, you know, many
24 of the things that the CUF report was touching on in
25 terms of how is the City most effectively using all
26 the workforce funding, right? In WIOA, there's

3 innovation in the word, right? How can we be
4 innovative, effective stewards of all the federal
5 money as well as the enormous amount of City money
6 that is invested each year?

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON WON: This is a separate
8 topic, but I hear from my CUNY professors and adjunct
9 professors all the time, and there's an incredible
10 amount of frustration about how the majority of the
11 workforce are adjunct, and they don't get proper
12 benefits, and they don't have proper workforce
13 development. So, can you help me understand the state
14 of CUNY, all of the professors who work there, and
15 how they are constantly struggling to make ends meet
16 because they aren't giving full tenure, and the
17 majority of them are forced to be part-time as
18 adjunct professors who are underpaid for the amount
19 of work that they do, and they are constantly
20 struggling to see how they're going to make ends meet
21 financially for themselves?

VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Sure. Thank you
for the question. So, last year, CUNY signed a
contract with our PSC, the Professional Staff
Congress, that included increases for adjunct
faculty. And we recognize that many faculty members

3 at CUNY are adjuncts and that support is necessary
4 for them, so that's why that was part of the priority
5 of that contract negotiation process.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON WON: But what are we going
7 to do to move the model so that you don't have a
8 bunch of part-time professors who are trying to
9 become full-time?

10 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: So, what I will
11 say is that CUNY is interested always... our faculty
12 are the heartbeat of what we do. They're in their
13 classrooms, they are the ones who are working on the
14 front lines with students to prepare them for not
15 just what they're learning and the learning outcomes,
16 but their careers in the future. So, we are
17 interested in being able to support more faculty.
18 Many of our workforce investments, for example, CUNY
19 2X Tech, includes investment in actually full-time
20 faculty lines to be able to create more opportunities
21 for faculty to get in the classroom.

CO-CHAIRPERSON WON: So, how many
full-time faculty lines have you increased from the
last fiscal year and how many will you increase by
the next fiscal year?

3 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: I do not have
4 that for you, so we'll have to get it to you
5 afterward.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON WON: Because it seems like
7 there's a structural issue with CUNY not allowing for
8 faculty to become full-time that you are... it almost
9 seems intentional that you only want adjunct
10 professors who are not going to make enough money or
11 have proper benefits.

12 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: As I said, we
13 welcome the opportunity to hire more faculty at CUNY
14 and are happy to follow up afterwards with these
15 numbers for you.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you, Council
17 Member.

18 Council Member Hanif.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you, Chairs,
20 Joseph and Won. And hi. It's great to see everybody.

21 Before I start, I got to say that I'm a
proud Brooklyn College graduate and yeah, I believe
they create leaders.

Okay. So, I want to understand access to
immigrant adult learners, and I think this is for New
York City Talent or CUNY too. For those who are

3 coming with credentials from their homeland, when
4 they're here, they're unable to practice in their
5 field. Are there concrete pathways that you all are
6 offering to ensure that their credentials match up or
7 how are those credentials being translated into
8 employment in City government and non-City supported
9 services?

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Thank you for
11 the question. So, yeah, obviously that is core to the
12 work of making sure that all New Yorkers, including
13 new New Yorkers or New Yorkers who have been here for
14 a while who need that additional support are
15 connected, and so I know that the Department of Small
16 Business Services, they have an NCLEX program that
17 helps connect people who have a degree from a foreign
18 country get additional support they need to get their
19 degrees.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: So, I have a couple
21 of people in my community who've come with
backgrounds in media and were journalists back home
and do really great work, which is why the
Bangladeshi ethnic community receives news. But they
should be providing for the city because they speak
Bangla, they read and write in the language, and our

3 translation services across the city still needs work
4 so I don't think that's a sufficient response. I am
5 very interested in ensuring that our immigrant adult
6 learners have a pathway. In particular, we've seen an
7 influx of migrants and they're doing a job that we're
8 very privileged to have because they're delivering
9 our medicines or food, but I don't want everyone to
10 be stuck in survival jobs. Does New York City Talent
11 address that?

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Yeah. I mean,
13 I think that is core to our work of making sure that
14 all New Yorkers have access to jobs, not just a job
15 that...

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: So, what's like a
17 initial... how does one come to you guys or what do you
18 guys, what do you do?

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: So, I will say
20 one example that is particularly exciting is a
21 licensed practical nurse apprenticeship pilot. That's
a pilot with 1199. It also is in partnership with
Medgar Evers College, and it is funded actually
through Robin Hood. And this is an example of
upskilling current workers who want an opportunity to
grow in a career to learn more and to have on-the-job

3 training, right, and then some of that, and like I
4 said, they're getting their training through Medgar
5 Evers, which is a CUNY program. And so this is one
6 example of wanting to make sure that we're supporting
7 workers and having opportunities to grow. And I say
8 apprenticeships in general, that's a lot of the work
9 that we are focused on is a great model of paid..

10 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: I don't have a lot
11 of time.

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: (INAUDIBLE)
13 type model. Okay. Sorry.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: No worries. I want
15 to end by asking, so you all have the pathways, but
16 there are people who might not get the job, right? So
17 what barriers are you coming across? Is it licensing,
18 English proficiency, employer bias, disability?
19 That's important to me. And then are other supports
20 such as career coaching, licensing, exam prep and
21 transportation assistance available for both New York
City Talent and CUNY?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: So, yeah, we
want to make sure that we are supporting New Yorkers
that have barriers to jobs, and so one of the things
that we're excited about is this Pathways to

3 Industrial and Construction Careers program, which is
4 through a federal EDA grant in partnership with Human
5 Resources Administration. And that's a program that
6 allows funding for things like buying tools, OMNY
7 Cards, and those supportive services that we know are
8 incredibly important because getting a job costs
9 money often, right, and so there are a lot of
10 important things that we want to make sure that we
11 are doing to support New Yorkers, not just in the
12 core, like connecting to a job, but what else do you
13 need to connect a job? And I think the Admin's
14 affordability agenda is really in line with that,
15 right? Childcare, housing. These are things that are
16 not necessarily workforce development per se, but are
17 incredibly important to making sure (TIMER CHIME)
18 that people can...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Absolutely.

20 Absolutely.

21 I want to just wrap and then I'll let you
guys from CUNY speak on your bit. It is incredibly
important right now that the Office of New York City
Talent be more at the forefront, given we are talking
about the affordability agenda. And when you don't
have a job, you can't afford childcare. You might

3 have a job and you still can't afford childcare. So,
4 I'd like to just better understand the numbers you
5 all collect or whatever data assessments you do, and
6 then definitely we'll be pushing to make sure that
7 you all are robust and you're reaching more people.
8 I'm grateful I'm here learning about you all and want
9 to make sure that you know I'm a partner.

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: And I

11 appreciate that very much, Council Member. I mean,
12 we're incredibly excited, and I mean that genuinely
13 of having a new Workforce Development Committee.
14 Workforce development always has been important,
15 remains incredibly important, and we're happy to meet
16 with you and brief you and catch you up on the work
17 that we're doing across the city, which spans many,
18 many things, including our Center for Workplace
19 Accessibility and Inclusion, which is dedicated to
20 helping making workplaces more inclusive for people
21 with disabilities, and that includes the City as an
employer as well as private employers. And so happy
to have this work. And I'll say we're not, you know,
our fingerprints are on a lot of work, even if our
name is not on everything. So, even if you haven't
heard of us in this or that, you've definitely seen

3 some of the work, including some of the stuff we're
4 talking about today. We also, you know, have our Jobs
5 NYC initiative that launched. That led a broad
6 spectrum of City partners across the entire whole of
7 government, and that initiative now is in terms of
8 hiring halls being led by SBS. We manage that
9 website, and that's a front door for New Yorkers or
10 job seekers or employers. So, happy to have that
11 opportunity and would love to spend time with you and
12 your team to catch up on all of the work.

13 DIRECTOR ELTOM: And just quickly, I just
14 quickly want to add also, we work very closely with
15 our partners at SBS. And specifically for tech, we
16 have a web development fellowship program that's been
17 running for almost 10 years, and this program
18 recruits directly from CBOs, including immigrants. As
19 an immigrant woman myself, I've faced those barriers
20 so thank you so much for highlighting that. So, this
21 program is working very closely to make sure that
there is a targeted outreach for this population and
that they are aware about this opportunity and that
you don't sometimes need a degree. You can just,
like, get this extra upskilling and just, like, being
able to get the jobs. So, they're actively working on

3 that, and that's a model that we can leverage across
4 other different industries.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: I really appreciate
6 that and looking forward to connecting more.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

8 How do you do outreach for your program?
9 You talked about a program, LPN at Medgar Evers. How
10 do you do your outreach? How do people know that your
11 program exists other than middle school? We're
12 talking about young adults who may not be in high
13 school.

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Yeah. So, that
15 program in particular is a pilot program. It's small.
16 So, those were existing employees at one Brooklyn
17 health system. They were 1199. So, in that particular
18 instance, they were able to get that opportunity
19 through their current employer and union.

20 I will say across the spectrum of
21 workforce services, it really depends, right?
22 Sometimes these are employers that we work with
23 directly. Sometimes it's CBOs to help connect people.
24 So, it varies in terms of some of the outreach. I
25 will say, like I mentioned, we have a Jobs NYC
26 website that is a front door for job seekers. And so

3 that helps them connect with services that they might
4 need or might be interested in. And then through the
5 variety of workforce services across the City,
6 whether that's through DYCD on the youth side, SBS on
7 the adult side, Human Resources Administration, there
8 are New Yorkers entering the system at a variety of
9 different places. And so in terms of the connection
10 to it, it will vary. But we want to make sure that
11 there is that information available to everyone. And
12 I think particularly as we've touched on a bit in
13 terms of knowing what's ahead, so talking to public
14 school students about what's ahead potentially in
15 CUNY. And that's core to the work too.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And when we talk
17 about underemployed, what about the folks that don't
18 have access to technology, and we know that's a real
19 thing in the city. When we talk about affordability,
20 underemployed, how do we reach those communities that
21 do not have that access?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Yeah. That's
really important, right? We want to make sure that
especially as the economy is changing and how people
find out about jobs has shifted. Like I mentioned, in
2024, the launch of the Jobs NYC hiring halls was a

3 great example of looking at unemployment data and
4 where there were disparities across the city and
5 going to those communities and having hiring halls in
6 person. We helped launch that along with many, many
7 partners across the city. It continues through SBS.
8 We also helped advocate in some baseline funding for
9 that that is now being administered through SBS. So
10 that's one example of doesn't require going to
11 LinkedIn or Indeed or some website, but it's actually
12 bringing employers across non-profit, private, City
13 government into communities and then working with
14 CBOs who serve those communities to make sure that
15 that work is amplified.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Are you including
17 faith-lead, faith-base as well into those
18 conversations? That's one way to capture.

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Yeah. I mean,
20 I don't have a list of all of the CBOs that have been
21 active, but I'm sure that there are and we're happy
to get to them.

CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Absolutely.

Council Member Epstein.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Thank you, Chair,
21 and thank you for joining us today.

2 For the integrated advisors, how many
3 integrated advisors per student do you have?

4 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: So, right now,
5 the integrated advising model has a student to
6 advisor ratio of 200 to one.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: 200 to one. So,
8 for every 200 students, there's one advisor.

9 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: For the
10 integrated advising model, yes. But we have
11 integrated advisors currently in 22 departments, so
12 they are not everywhere across the system.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: And so I
14 understand what you're saying that people who have
15 meet with integrated advisors are two times more
16 likely. But if there are 200 students for every one
17 integrated advisor, the odds for a student to be able
18 to get to that advisor seems really slim, right?

19 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Yes,
20 absolutely. So, to speak to that point, we know...

21 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Can I... I don't
have a lot of time.

VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Oh, I'm sorry.

COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: But like, how do
we fix that? How does CUNY fix that problem?

3 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Sure.

4 Absolutely. So, the answer is right now across CUNY,
5 integrated advisors, as I said, there are 22 of them
6 in different departments. Additionally, our career
7 services advisors have ratios of up to 5,000 students
8 (sic) for every one student currently given our
9 resources. To scale these humans individually at the
10 200 to one ratio would require an investment of over
11 300 million dollars every single year. That's not
12 feasible for us to be able to necessarily scale those
13 humans. What we have to do is create through CUNY
14 Beyond an anchor of enough of those integrated
15 advisors who establish the practice for our campus
16 and then can scale and retrain other academic
17 advisors. Ultimately, the thing we're looking to do
18 is make sure all academic advisors, not just these
19 individuals who are hired as integrated advisors, are
20 talking to students not only about academics, but
21 also about careers through the use of tools, through
retraining, and through the mandatory sessions that
they have to have with students.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: I appreciate what
20 you're saying, but I think we have a problem that
21 needs to be fixed by us. We have a problem saying

3 students do better when they get support, but we
4 don't have enough people supporting students so they
5 can get better. Do you focus on, how about kids who
6 are in ASAP or an ELP program, do they have a higher
7 percentage of students to advisors?

8 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Yes. So, ASAP
9 does have a higher...

10 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: What is that
11 ratio?

12 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: I believe it's
13 150 students per every advisor.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: 50?

15 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: 150.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: 150.

17 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: For every
18 advisor, yes. Which is consistent with the National
19 Association of Advisors best cohort ratio.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: For students who
21 are in an ASAP program?

VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: In advising
cohorts.

COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: But not in an
ASAP specific program? Because if you're in ASAP,
basically you're a lower income student who may be a

3 first-time college student in your family, and so we
4 want to give as much support to that family as
5 possible, that person as possible, so they can be
6 successful. We know there are higher ratios of kids
7 who go through ASAP or ELP programs to be more
8 successful in graduating, so don't we want a lower
9 ratio so to help them become more and more
10 successful?

11 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: So, the ASAP
12 model is a lower ratio than the current advisor
13 model.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: It's 150 to one,
15 right?

16 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Correct, which
17 is consistent with national best practice and
18 recommendations. What our challenge is, is that right
19 now ASAP does not serve every student at CUNY, so we
20 really have to make sure that in addition to the
21 amazing model of ASAP and these amazing integrated
academic and career advisement, that we are reaching
every single student through their current academic
advising, whether that's with professional advisors
or faculty.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: You're saying
4 everyone who might be eligible for ASAP isn't
5 accepted to the ASAP program, even though they might
6 be financially eligible for ASAP?

7 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: I can't speak
8 to that. All I can say is that ASAP does not...

9 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: It'd be great to
10 know, actually, because if there are kids who should
11 be in an ELP program or in ASAP, but they can't get
12 in because of some limitations or restrictions that
13 we're putting on it, I think it's really helpful for
14 us to know how do we expand ASAP, because it is a
15 multi-service approach to getting kids through
16 college, but also we want to make sure that once
17 they're in a program, they get the support so they
18 can come out and be successful college graduates as
19 well.

20 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Thank you.
21 It's, yes, a fabulous model, and we're very proud of
it.

COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Yeah. So, can you
answer the question or maybe get back to us about are
there people who are eligible for ASAP but aren't

3 getting into ASAP because of limitations CUNY is
4 putting on the program through numbers or costs?

5 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: We're happy to
6 get back to you on that.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: That would be
8 really happy, so I appreciate that.

9 And just on, I just wanted to go back to
10 New York City for Talent about, you said you have one
11 youth staffer, so one person's working. When you say
12 youth, you mean what age population?

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: So I will say
14 that the work of our office across, and again..

15 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: I only have like
16 30 seconds, so like what age population for youth?

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON WON: I'll give you more
18 time.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Okay. Thank you,
20 Julie.

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: So, I mean, it
depends from like, we do a lot of work with New York
City Public Schools, right, so all Public Schools
students as well as people who go through CUNY,
which, generally speaking, is young people, but not
exclusively.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: What age group
4 does that youth person work with?

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: There's no
6 necessarily specific age group that we're just
7 dedicated to that we'll say, no, we cannot have...

8 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: So, you're saying
9 it's not like 14 to 22?

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Middle school
11 through CUNY, right, and so that's typically the...

12 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: And so you have
13 one staffer focused on middle school through CUNY?

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: So, we have...
15 many staffers are working across the, you know, help
16 inform the work and the youth voice as well. And like
17 I said, we have youth apprentices who help inform the
18 work, whether that's in a youth dedicated space or
19 not. And so we have a lot of staff that make sure
20 that we're incorporating how this may impact youth,
21 whether that's...

COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: So 37 staff, one
focused on youth, but all the 36 help with youth as
well?

3 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: I would say
4 that youth as well as the other populations, whether
5 it's adult workers or people with disabilities...

6 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Could you give us
7 data about how many people in that 14 to 22-year-old
8 population you serve each year versus adults 22 plus
9 with the post-college population so we can figure out
10 who you're serving and how much attention you can put
11 toward the younger population?

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Yeah.
13 Absolutely. We're happy to give you that data. And
14 again, we work with the youth serving agencies,
15 right, and so it's not necessarily in all cases us
16 working directly to do those services, but helping
17 support that work., and I would say it is core to
18 strewn across everyone in our office of making sure
19 that youth are...

20 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Yeah. We all want
21 young people to be successful. We want them to finish
high school, go to college, have a successful career,
give back to the city that we all love. But I think
there's sometimes gaps in that system that prevent
people from being successful, and we want to close
those gaps to create those opportunities. And I think

3 sometimes I laud all the work you're doing. I know
4 this is hard, but we need to know what's not working.
5 I don't think we need to have a rosy picture of how
6 things are great because we know there are gaps, and
7 I think that's important for us to hear.

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Yeah. And we
9 are very proud of the work of our office and the work
10 of the City, but we also know that we constantly need
11 to improve. And so, you know, making sure that there
12 is a workforce system that works for all New Yorkers,
13 right, that we're not necessarily just constrained by
14 like, we're going to stop serving you once you hit
15 this age, but appreciate your recognition of the good
16 work.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Thank you.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: There's something
19 we say in education, you should never be ashamed of
20 your data. That data is going to drive your policy.
21 That data is going to drive the work that you do. And
that's one thing I know. I, as an educator, I've
always take that with me. That I'm not ashamed of it.
I know where my students are not good and where I
need to work on so that's kind of what my colleague
is saying. What's not working? How can we come in to

3 counsel and support those areas that have the gap?

4 That's basically what we're saying. Am I correct,
5 Council Member?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Yes.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Got you.

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: I appreciate
9 that.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Council Member
11 Wong?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Yes. Hi. The word
13 SYEP was mentioned many times, a school-based SYEP,
14 and I don't even have a script so I'm just going to
15 ask. For a participant in your school-based SYEP
16 program, they have to be already enrolled to the CUNY
17 system. Is that right?

18 DEAN SOONACHAN: No. Those are high
19 school-based programs.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Oh, high school.
21 Okay. So, how does that work? They have to sign up
with the CUNY as a project sponsor, right, or what if
they sign up with a different project sponsor? Like,
you know, in Queens or Browns, Staten Island. How are
they going to enter the school-based SYEP? Can you
talk about that?

3 CHIEF HEBERT: Yes. So, SYEP serves over
4 100,000 young people per year. And there's, out of
5 those 100,000 slots, I think last year, DYCD served
6 22,900 in school-based programming. Over 230 schools
7 participate. And so if a young person is in that
8 school, they can work with the school and the CBO
9 provider to access those slots. But there's also
10 other SYEP programs for either, if the young person's
11 not in that school, or if the young person would like
12 to participate in a different SYEP program, they have
13 those opportunities and choices throughout DYCD's
14 programming.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: No, I understand.
16 Okay. Let's say they stay in the high school for the
17 summer to do SYEP. How does that relate to, say,
18 getting themselves entering a CUNY school system?
19 What is the connection there?

20 DEAN SOONACHAN: So, we partner with the
21 SYEP program in two main ways. The largest one is
through Work, Learn, Grow during the school year. So,
young adults who are in the Work, Learn, Grow program
take a free CUNY credit-bearing course as part of
their Work, Learn, Grow experience. And so that's
open to all of the students who are in that pathway,

3 and that's across multiple high schools. We have a
4 smaller pilot that we started last summer that offers
5 a CUNY credit-bearing course over the summer, for
6 summer SYEP, where we partnered with four of the CBO
7 SYEP providers to make sure that that opportunity was
8 available to students who are working with those
9 providers for the summer.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: So, they get college
11 credit at the end of the SYEP program?

12 DEAN SOONACHAN: Right.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: And they could use
14 that and apply. Then they take these credits in any
15 CUNY system. Is that right?

16 DEAN SOONACHAN: Correct.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Okay. And how many
18 high schools are participating in this school-based
19 SYEP?

20 CHIEF HEBERT: 230.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: 230. Great. Now, you
know, I'm going to follow up with some other
questions after this hearing. Yeah.

My second question is from a statement
from Lauren Anderson. It says that CUNY Industry
Support Hub acts as a first stop for industry

3 partners looking to navigate to any CUNY resource.

4 Now, it's my understanding that we have private
5 enterprises that either are too busy, that they don't
6 have time or don't have anybody talk to CUNY so I
7 think quite often it's the college's job to reach out
8 to them. I know like associate deans that travel in
9 the tri-state or even all over the country sitting
10 down with private enterprises. What kind of talent
11 are you looking for? And they will say, oh, we need
12 AI engineers. We need people that do 3D printing. We
13 need yada, yada, yada. And you, that associate dean
14 will come back with a list. All right. These are the
15 people that private enterprises are looking for. We
16 got to get to work and prepare kids so they can get
17 hired. So, what I would like to know is that what
18 kind of work... are you doing that? Because, again, a
19 lot of private enterprises, some of them may not even
20 be interested in talking to CUNY because they think,
21 oh, we only talk to like certain top tier schools.
Please talk about it.

18 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Sure.

19 Absolutely. I'm happy to. So, the industry support
20 hub is not just a passive front door, but
21 historically we have not had any single place for

3 employers that were even interested in working with
4 us to go to land to navigate our system so that is
5 what they serve from a both passive and proactive
6 outreach perspective. Most recently in January, so
7 just last month, they launched a Power Your Business
8 with CUNY campaign that mobilized lots of our
9 existing industry partnerships, including Goldman
10 Sachs, TD Bank, Nine Dot Energy, et cetera, to
11 actually proactively reach out to other employers and
12 suggest that they come to CUNY to work with us. But
13 that alone is not sufficient. You're right. Colleges
14 have to make that kind of proactive connection to
15 employers. So, that's largely what the CUNY Inclusive
16 Economy and CUNY Beyond aims to scale, is investing
17 in industry specialists at the campus level (TIMER
18 CHIME) who can make proactive connections to
19 employers. To date, that network of our industry
20 support hub and those inclusive economy industry
21 specialists have proactively engaged 2,100 businesses
in this work. That's not sufficient. We've set very
big goals around increasing by 20 percent the number
of employers that are recruiting from CUNY, which
means 6,000 additional employers. So, we're on our
way by 2030, but there's more to do.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Yeah. Again,
4 somebody here mentioned the technology is evolving so
5 fast so a year or two down the line, they will be
6 recruiting for very, very different talent, and your
7 curriculum will have to adapt accordingly at a much
8 higher pace than before.

9 Sorry. One final question. I hope I have
10 time. Let's say I want to study in, or not me, maybe
11 there's a high school graduate want to study
12 engineering, civil, mechanical, electrical. It is my
13 understanding they can only apply to one school. City
14 College. Is that right?

15 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: That is not
16 correct. We have engineering programs at multiple
17 campuses.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Where are the other
19 campuses?

20 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: We can give you
21 a comprehensive list, but it includes both
associate's degrees. For example, Hostos has an
engineering program.

COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Four years. Four
years. There's only one place. Is that right?

3 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: No. College of
4 Staten Island and New York City Tech also have
5 various engineering programs.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Four years?

7 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Yes.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Okay. No, because
9 the feedback that I've been getting is that the CUNY
10 system is not offering enough engineering programs.
11 And when they apply, they only have two or three
12 choices to choose from. And that might be an issue
13 that you want to look at, that you might want to open
14 up more engineering programs in other campuses.

15 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Thank you. And
16 also, we'd love your help in spreading the word about
17 these programs so we will get you a list.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Thank you.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you, Council
20 Member.

21 On that note, I want to just do a quick
follow-up. What specifically is CUNY doing to improve
employee engagement with CUNY programming to create
accessible apprenticeship programs? Just wanted a
quick follow-up.

3 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Yeah.

4 Absolutely. So, there are two ways that CUNY works on
5 apprenticeship programming. The first is through
6 registered apprenticeships that are largely run out
7 of our Adult and Continuing Ed Departments, which are
8 done in partnership with the State. For example,
9 Kingsborough's Maritime Technology Program is a great
10 example. Many of those apprenticeship programs also
11 bear college credit so that students can move
12 directly into degree paths. So, there's one, you can
13 be an apprenticeship regardless of if you want to get
14 a degree, but it will help you get there. The second
15 strategy that we use, as I mentioned previously, is
16 really embedding apprenticeships into our degree
17 programs. So, they are a standard part of practice
18 for students who enroll in our AAS programs. Right
19 now, we're at 17 of our AAS programs have that model
20 in them. Basically, what they allow for is students,
21 as I said, to work during the last semester of their
AAS degree on the job with the intention of
converting into employment. We see that as really
essential and necessary. We do see it as necessary to
make sure that it is pointed at a particular degree
path, though, that's meant to move into a job. So,

3 for instance, we don't do apprenticeships at the
4 bachelor's level because bachelor's degree recipients
5 should be able to move into the workplace and the
6 more appropriate, like straight to job work-based
7 learning appropriate model is co-ops or internships.
8 So just depending on the degree level, we have a
9 different strategy.

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: And I also
11 want to highlight the Civil Service Pathways
12 Fellowship Program, which is an apprenticeship-like
13 model. And that's a partnership that DCAS has with
14 CUNY, a two-year fellowship for recent CUNY graduates
15 with a pathway to permanent civil service employment.
16 And so, this program has grown over time, but it's a
17 great way that recent CUNY grads can get plugged into
18 what it's like to work for civil service, as well as
19 making sure that they're getting that professional
20 development. So, these fellows go through trainings
21 that are hosted by DCAS and then have the ability to
take a civil service exam as well. So that's an
apprenticeship-like model of making sure that the
City is helping connect CUNY students into civil
service.

3 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yes. We know our
4 agencies are skeletons. We need to fill them up with
5 our City staffers.

6 The Green Economy Action Plan focus on
7 four industry sectors, construction, engineering,
8 architect, management, and business. Are there
9 specific bridge program at CUNY designed to move
10 students into these specific sectors? And do they
11 include apprenticeship as well? I'm sure.

12 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: So, we do have
13 many different types of programs that are targeting
14 those particular types of occupations, whether they
15 be degree-seeking programs or non-degree credential
16 programs. As I mentioned before, I alluded to some of
17 the projects that we're doing on the capital side to
18 make sure our degree programs have the equipment and
19 state-of-the-art pathways for students to be able to
20 learn in the classroom what they will need to do on
21 the job. In terms of direct pipelines to employers,
whether it be through apprenticeships or work-based
learning opportunities, CUNY Inclusive Economy
actually as a focal area includes green economy
roles, and so three of our departments have industry
specialists who are proactively building connections

3 in those occupational areas for students. It's
4 variable across departments because different
5 departments focus on different disciplines, but
6 between them, yes, we are focused on that.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

8 The recent urban, I mean, the recent
9 Center for Urban Future report entitled Five Ideas
10 for Mayor Mamdani can boast a workforce development
11 ideas directly related to CUNY. One of them is to
12 provide free OMNY Card and day one child care support
13 for CUNY students to boost completion rates,
14 accelerate credential attainment, maximize returns on
15 public investment. What is your opinion of this idea,
16 whether it would work effectively to support CUNY
17 students?

18 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: So, we are very
19 excited that our FY27 budget request includes 1.4
20 million dollars to pilot, thanks to the encouragement
21 of our student senate who are here today, and I'm
sure we'll talk about it, a OMNY program for
students. Right now, the proposal is that it's split
between State and City funding, and we very much look
forward to working with the Council and the Mayor and
the MTA to figure out how we would deploy that.

3 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: One of my
4 Colleagues had asked me, is CUNY also pushing for
5 Fair Fares inside the campuses? Is that something
6 that CUNY is doing?

7 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: I will have to
8 get back to you on that.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: It's to provide a
10 half fare for our lowest income New Yorkers? So,
11 that's one of the questions one of my Colleagues
12 asked.

13 Another Center for Urban Future idea
14 related to CUNY is to help scale up CUNY's promising
15 but still small-scale career success program,
16 including CUNY Beyond, the Exclusive Economy
17 Initiative, and CUNY 2X Tech to ensure more CUNY
18 students don't just earn a degree but also have a
19 strong career outcome. What is your opinion of this
20 idea and whether it could work effectively to support
21 CUNY students?

VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: We love it, and
I know Eli Dvorkin is here. I thank him for his
advocacy for that idea.

CUNY Beyond is designed to take what we
know works already and has proven results for

3 students to connect it, elevate it, and scale it
4 throughout our entire degree path. That includes the
5 CUNY inclusive economy model, so it was part of
6 Beyond. We are very enthusiastic about scaling that.
7 Again, we started with four. We're looking to bring
8 on six schools in the next wave starting in July and
9 would appreciate the Council and the City's support
10 in making sure that our community colleges are part
11 of that.

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay. You hear
13 that, Eli? You wrote the blueprint.

14 Another idea from the Center for Urban
15 Future Report also is to launch efforts to recruit
16 the next 100 employees to partner on building
17 pathways into good jobs by expanding skill-based
18 hiring, scaling employer engagement, strengthening
19 connections among CUNY non-for-profit providers and
20 industries. How do you think we can make that work in
21 this blueprint?

VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Sure. I'll take
a first step. Would you like to, Doug?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: I'll say that
we know that employer engagement is core to workforce
development, and so our industry partnership teams

3 work very, very closely with employers, whether
4 that's small businesses, startups. We also work with
5 the local Chambers, large corporations, as well as
6 the organizations that help support them, like the
7 Job CEO Council Partnership for New York City, and
8 then specialized groups, labor organizations as well,
9 and so, you know, we want to make sure that New
10 Yorkers have access to all sorts of jobs
11 opportunities with all sorts of employers and that
12 we're hearing from those employers as to what their
13 needs are, what they need today, what they need in
14 the future. And so, we do a lot of this work through
15 our industry partnerships, through our apprenticeship
16 accelerator team. Like I mentioned, through Community
17 Hiring, we are bringing more employers to the
18 workforce system. It's just getting up and running,
19 but it is not a subtle program. It is 20 billion
20 dollars of annual City contract spend. That means
21 those employers are coming to the system, and so
we're excited about that opportunity to bring an
increased quantity, increased quality of jobs to the
public workforce system. And so, we agree that
employer engagement is core to workforce development.

3 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: And if I could
4 just add to that briefly, we think that there's an
5 incredibly valuable role for City leaders to play in
6 asking employers to come to the table to do this
7 work. And from our perspective at CUNY, as I
8 mentioned before, our goal is actually 6,000
9 employers coming to our doors. In order to make that
10 a reality, we do need to invest in the infrastructure
11 to be able to engage employers. Unfortunately, it's
12 not something that you can outsource to technology.
13 Building those relationships that lead to hiring
14 partnerships and also the updating of curriculum and
15 the development of students takes time, takes
16 capital, and human capital to be able to build those
17 relationships, which is why we're very excited that
18 in addition to this call for employers, there's also
19 a call to scale the infrastructure for employer
20 engagement at CUNY.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And that's why
we're having this conversation today. This is our
first stab at it. We want to continue this
partnership when we want to continue this dialogue,
especially along with Council Member Won, to make
sure that we are meeting the demands. If we really

3 want New Yorkers to stay here, they have to be able
4 to afford to live in this city and childcare has to
5 be accessible, transportation has to be accessible.

6 And one of my next questions is, last
7 September, this Committee held a hearing on pathways
8 for CUNY students into the art and cultural job
9 sectors. The CUNY Art Initiative count one of its
10 three goals, the integration of arts into CUNY
11 curricula across all disciplines, not just
12 disciplines in art fields. This initiative is part of
13 ensuring all CUNY students have access to the arts
14 and can therefore consider art as a viable career
15 path. At the time of hearing, there was not any
16 timeline or place for implementing this work or
17 measuring its effectiveness once implemented. Do you
18 have an update? That's a very important sector, and I
19 think we seem to sleep on cultural. I think there
20 should be a stronger partnership. I know in public
21 schools there is. When I was the Chair, I made sure
we baselined arts education into our budget because
we know it's a career pathways, and we want to see
how can you bring those things together.

3 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Absolutely. So,
4 and then I would welcome Andrea to talk about some of
5 the work we do at the K-16 level.

6 Absolutely. And coming out of that
7 conversation, there was a lot of very helpful
8 questions that the Council asked us that we're still
9 working to sort through in terms of integration into
10 curricula. What I will say is we do now have numbers
11 that we didn't have at that hearing in terms of
12 students who are participating in Cultural Corps, the
13 experience they have working in the cultural sector
14 that CUNY is connecting them to, and how many of them
15 stay in the cultural sector. So right now, we have
16 served roughly 1,200 students through CUNY Cultural
17 Corps, which is a paid internship program. And we
18 have about 50 percent of those students have wage
19 records associated with them from the State that we
20 can see. Of those, about 30 percent of those students
21 after they graduated went into the arts workforce so
we're excited to build on that. But, certainly, in
addition to our academic preparation, we know that
actually making sure there's like a clear linear
pathway to those jobs is necessary through our
internship programs.

3 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Yeah. I mean,
4 I think the arts are what make New York, New York,
5 right? I mean, I'm wearing a suit and tie right now,
6 but I love concerts, I love theater, and I love that
7 livelihood of New York so, you know, I just
8 appreciate you raising that as something that is
9 really important. And we work closely with the
10 Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment. They
11 essentially run the industry partnership-like type
12 model that we have at our office, and they do have
13 some post-production training program that provides
14 participants with skills training, job placement
15 assistance in the post-production industry. And so
16 that obviously is really important to make sure that
17 the arts can continue to thrive here in New York,
18 because I guess that's what makes New York, New York.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yeah. It's a huge
20 industry. And we want to make sure that CUNY is
21 creating that pipeline to career, that they know
there's possibilities, not just to see a show, but to
work on set, right, to create set. Motion Pictures
High School in Queens is a model that should be where
the pipeline is. Their model. They are amazing.

3 Also, at the September hearing, the
4 Committee learned that CUNY did not have a clear
5 measure in place for tracking long-term success for
6 CUNY Cultural Corps interns, such as their
7 post-graduation placement, art, cultural careers. Do
8 you have any updates on that?

9 VICE CHANCELLOR ANDERSON: Yes. That's
10 what I was mentioning. So, we do have the data now,
11 and what we are seeing from the students that we have
12 wage records on from the State that 30 percent of
13 those students have moved into employment in the arts
14 and cultural sector. One note about that, and the
15 only 50 percent of students that we have records for,
16 the wage record data that we get from the State is
17 somewhat incomplete, because it does not include job
18 titles so we really have no sense of the actual roles
19 that CUNY students and alumni are occupying. We are
20 working together with the State to explore what might
21 be possible for building out those wage records, but
that's also an area that we would love some help.

CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You're good? Okay.

I'm going into my favorite subject. CUNY
prepares many teachers for work in K-12, especially
for work in our public school right here in New York

3 City. What issues is CUNY facing in preparing
4 graduates to enter the important sector of our City
5 workforce? What measures of success do you use in
6 judging your teacher preparation programs?

7 DEAN SOONACHAN: I'm happy to take that.
8 Yeah. We are very excited to partner with New York
9 City Public Schools to meet the growing demand for
10 classroom teachers. One of the first hurdles that
11 teachers face is the certification process. After
12 they've completed their degree with CUNY, they then
13 need to complete New York State certification to be
14 hired by Public Schools. There's multiple kind of
15 steps in that process, studying for those exams,
16 paying for those exams. If students start that
17 process while they're still enrolled at CUNY, they
18 can use their financial aid towards those costs. When
19 they wait until they've graduated to start that
20 process, it can prolong the time to, or even they
21 cannot have the funds to do those things. So, we're
really trying to close that gap and get more students
in that pipeline before they cross the stage at
graduation. We're piloting some new advising and
support strategies to really get a higher percentage
of students who are in line for graduation to start

3 that certification process and go directly into
4 hiring. We really assess the effectiveness of the
5 program through a few different ways. All of the
6 teacher preparation programs are separately
7 accredited. In addition to our Middle States Higher
8 Education accreditation, they are accredited by
9 teacher preparation associations, right, so the
10 campuses are looking at a pretty intensive and
11 rigorous data process that also includes site visits
12 and interviews. We track the retention and wages of
13 education graduates. New teachers with CUNY degrees
14 have a 17 percent higher five-year retention rate in
15 New York City Public Schools than teachers without
16 CUNY degrees so they're not just getting hired but
17 they're staying in those jobs. Our public leads
18 dashboard shows that bachelor degree students with
19 education degrees earn a median income of 79,000
20 after five years compared with 73,000 for CUNY's
21 bachelor degree graduates outside of education. And
generally for education graduates, we see that at
every stage, one, three, five, and 10 years out, they
have those higher median incomes so those are really
all the metrics that we are tracking to identify the
success of that work.

3 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Are you working
4 with the City that we're also meeting the needs for
5 shortage areas?

6 DEAN SOONACHAN: Yes. Our teams work very
7 closely together. The HR department at New York City
8 Public Schools and with our Central Office and campus
9 leaderships in the schools of ed are meeting very
10 regularly and looking at a very granular level at the
11 projected openings by borough and district, lining
12 that up with...

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: License area as
14 well.

15 DEAN SOONACHAN: Yeah.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay. Thank you.

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: And I also
18 just want to add that our office through our
19 apprenticeship accelerator...

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You do teacher
21 recruitment too?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Well, so
actually we have apprenticeship funding for two
programs that are registered apprenticeships with the
Kennedy Children's Center, that is for early
childhood special educators, and so that is an

3 exciting program that is a State registered
4 apprenticeship program. And that includes credential
5 certificates, getting the learning experience and the
6 paid work experience. And so that apprenticeship
7 model is really, really important because it can, you
8 know, one, the apprenticeship is paid, it is learned,
9 it has a career pathway. And so through our
10 apprenticeship accelerator we're funding specifically
11 early childhood special educators through Kennedy
12 Children's Center and CUNY Professional Development
13 Institute, and so I think part of that work is really
14 sort of making sure that the future of the city's
15 childhood educators and educators generally are
16 supported so the apprenticeship model is a great
17 example of that.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Well, thank you
19 for that. We'll be talking more because that is an
20 area of shortage across the city and especially with
21 universal childcare we do need the workforce so CUNY
is going to be responsible for that workforce, and I
think making sure that we have the apprentice and the
teachers ready to go so thank you. Thank you so much.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIPARI: Thank you.

3 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. We'll
4 be in touch with follow-up questions.

5 I now open the hearing for public
6 testimony. I remind members of the public that this
7 is a formal government proceeding and that decorum
8 shall be observed at all times. As such, members of
9 the public shall remain silent at all times.

10 The witness table is reserved for people
11 who wish to testify. No video recording or
12 photography is allowed from the witness table.
13 Further, members of the public may not present audio
14 or video recording as testimony but may submit
15 transcripts of such recordings to Sergeant-at-Arms
16 for inclusion in the hearing record.

17 If you wish to speak at today's hearing,
18 please fill out an appearance card with the
19 Sergeant-at-Arms if you have not done so already and
20 wait to be recognized. When recognized, you will have
21 two minutes to speak on today's hearing topic,
Aligning Higher Education with Workforce Demand.

If you have a written statement or
additional written testimony you wish to submit for
the record, please provide a copy of that testimony
to Sergeant-at-Arms.

3 I now call the first panel. Eli Dvorkin.

4 ELI DVORKIN: Good afternoon, Chair. Thank
5 you so much for having me today. My name is Eli
6 Dvorkin. I'm the Editorial and Policy Director of the
7 Center for an Urban Future. Let me start with some
8 good news.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay.

10 ELI DVORKIN: For a change, maybe. You
11 know, CUNY remains the single largest and most
12 effective engine of economic mobility in New York
13 City. And today, CUNY is doing more than ever to
14 align education with workforce demand from expanding
15 work-based learning and employer partnerships to
16 launching initiatives like CUNY 2X Tech, the
17 Inclusive Economy Initiative, and now under the
18 umbrella of the broader CUNY Beyond effort. But the
19 labor market is changing faster than ever, and the
20 scale of the challenge has grown. Far too many
21 students still struggle to translate academic
achievement into strong career outcomes. For
instance, just two-thirds of CUNY graduates are
employed within a year after graduation. Many earn
less than a living wage in New York City today. One
in 10 alumni end up in retail or food service even

3 five years after graduation. Rising to 13 percent for
4 community college graduates. And even graduates who
5 enter high-wage fields sometimes earn only half the
6 median wage of peers in the same industry. And they
7 are graduating into the toughest entry-level job
8 market in years, if not decades. Since 2022, our
9 research shows that entry-level job postings
10 requiring little to no experience have plunged 37.4
11 percent in New York City, and internships are down by
12 a similar 37 percent compared to before the pandemic.
13 At the same time, only 12 percent of CUNY
14 undergraduates report completing a paid internships,
15 and that's far below the national average of 57
16 percent, although there's been progress on that
17 figure, but it's still a long, long way to go. In
18 this environment, career success should be embedded
19 across the institution or this economic mobility
20 engine could stall. To CUNY's credit, momentum is
21 building. Chancellor Matos Rodriguez has made career
success a central priority for the institution. Last
October, the university launched CUNY Beyond, a
system-wide effort to make career-connected learning
a core part of every student's experience. And, as
part of that work, CUNY has embedded industry

3 specialists in some departments, has been able to
4 expand paid internships up from 10 percent to 12
5 percent, strengthened employer partnerships, and
6 grown initiatives like 2X Tech and Inclusive Economy
7 Initiative that are starting to bear fruit. And these
8 early results are really promising. Participating
9 departments report higher internship participation,
10 stronger job placements, higher starting wages.

11 But these efforts to date still reach
12 only a tiny fraction of students. The Inclusive
13 Economy Initiative currently touches, for instance,
14 just about 9 percent of CUNY's 450 academic
15 departments. If CUNY is to remain the City's most
16 powerful engine of upward mobility, City policymakers
17 should help scale what's working and help the
18 University adapt more quickly to a changing economy.

19 The Council can play a decisive role.
20 First, we recommend making a major public commitment
21 backed by funding to scale career success efforts
across CUNY. This means expanding (TIMER CHIME) the
Inclusive Economy Initiative, building campus level
capacity by hiring more of those academic career
advisors, renewing and expanding proven efforts like
CUNY 2X Tech, and replicating that model in other

3 sectors, growing the practitioners and residents
4 Corps deeper into healthcare, business and
5 professional services, and setting a clear goal,
6 ensuring that at least 30 percent of students
7 complete a paid internship or work-based learning
8 experience before graduation. Without a measurable
9 target and the resources to meet it, tens of
10 thousands of graduates will continue leaving CUNY
11 each year with degrees but limited work experience.

12 Second, invest in the infrastructure
13 needed to manage employer partnerships at scale. CUNY
14 has begun piloting a system-wide CRM platform, but
15 philanthropic dollars alone cannot bring it to full
16 implementation. Today, separate campus systems lead
17 to duplicative outreach and missed opportunities with
18 employers. A fully scaled CRM will allow
19 undergraduate campuses to coordinate engagement,
20 track outcomes, and present a seamless face to
21 employers.

 Third, expand paid internship capacity
directly. A pay-it-forward revolving internship fund
seeded with City dollars and repaid when employers
hire interns full time could dramatically expand
subsidized placements. Today, CUNY can fund only

3 about 20 percent of campus requests. Demand far
4 exceeds supply.

5 Fourth, lead by example. City government
6 is one of New York's largest employers, yet remains
7 an underutilized launchpad for CUNY talent. Agencies
8 should significantly expand CUNY internships and
9 create clear internship-to-employment pathways.

10 These are all tangible steps that the
11 City Council could advance through budget and
12 oversight, but action should go beyond scaling career
13 success at CUNY alone. To better align higher
14 education with workforce demand, workforce
15 development should be elevated as a core
16 affordability strategy, and that should include
17 making a bold new investment in workforce development
18 through a New York City Talent Development Fund,
19 Career Impact Bonds, Workforce AI Readiness Fund,
20 and/or by tapping funds from rezonings to scale what
21 works. Establishing an Economic Mobility Cabinet and
Workforce Czar to coordinate policy across agencies
and recruiting the next 100 major employers into
structured partnerships like the Jobs CEO Council,
which could be done through challenge-based
procurement or other tools, not for government to do

3 that work, but to incentivize public/private
4 partnership to bring that kind of work to the next
5 100 major employers in New York City. And the stakes
6 could not be higher. The City leaders have rightly
7 made affordability a top priority. Strengthening
8 career success for CUNY students should be central to
9 that strategy because boosting incomes is just as
10 important as lowering costs. And CUNY is generating
11 momentum, but without sustained City investment,
12 infrastructure, and accountability, it will be
13 difficult to meet the demands of this moment. With
14 bold action from the Council, CUNY can transform
15 career outcomes for tens of thousands more New
16 Yorkers each year and remain the City's most powerful
17 engine of economic mobility. Thank you, Chair.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much.
19 We always speak the same language. Thank you. Som my
20 first question. In your report entitled "Five Ideas
21 for How Mayor Mamdani Can Bolster Workforce
Development," did you have any discussions with CUNY
or NYC Talent about issues you've addressed or about
your recommendations?

22 ELI DVORKIN: Yes, absolutely. We sat down
with many of the folks that were just here up on this

3 panel before we published that report, discussed some
4 of these ideas with them, and as I think, as you
5 heard, there was really strong support. Maybe some of
6 the pieces that are easier for me to say than
7 potentially for colleagues in government to say are
8 that first of all, CUNY needs that investment to be
9 able to expand what's working. It's not possible.
10 CUNY's gone through a difficult many, several year
11 period now as you well know with, you know, proposed
12 budget cuts, the Council's pushed back, but
13 ultimately CUNY needs more resources to be able to
14 execute on this strategy. And as you heard, only a
15 few thousand students right now are benefiting in an
16 institution that serves a quarter of a million or
17 more so there's a long way to go to take what's
18 working and make sure that it's embedded across the
19 university and to scale up those programs. I think on
20 the NYC Talent side, you know, part of what we're
21 calling for, for instance, with the idea of more
flexible City investment in what's working, is that
so much of the investment that we have in the City
today is in programs that aren't necessarily able to
meet the the full scale of the need, because
delivering those programs that really work isn't

3 cheap. And unfortunately, many of the programs that
4 we have in New York City, they're funded at a level
5 that's just insufficient to actually deliver good
6 outcomes. The programs that often deliver the best
7 outcomes are piecing together, in some cases, very
8 little to no public money, with the constant
9 challenge of raising private dollars that can
10 actually fund programs at the level that's needed to
11 deliver good outcomes. So part of what we think is
12 missing in terms of the City's investment... look, the
13 City's overall investment through key workforce
14 agencies in adults has actually declined over the
15 past decade. The City is investing more in youth, and
16 obviously that's critically important. It needs to
17 continue. But there's a real gap when it comes to
18 flexible, outcomes-driven funding for adult workforce
19 programs that are sufficient to actually meet the
20 costs of delivering an effective program, and that's
21 the part of this that's a little harder potentially
for folks, you know, that are in government to talk
about, but the research makes it abundantly clear
without that kind of an investment in building
capacity for programs to deliver good outcomes, we're
going to see programs that continue to receive some

3 public funding that fail to meet those outcomes, and
4 other programs that are really meeting the mark, that
5 are delivering excellent outcomes, are expanding
6 outside of New York City rather than in New York
7 City. So there really is a key challenge there when
8 it comes to actually putting the flexible City
9 dollars into the system to complement and support
10 innovation and getting to the level of funding needed
11 to deliver the best possible outcomes.

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So, I hear a
13 couple of things here. Comprehensive, has to be
14 comprehensive from our youth all the way to our older
15 adults... I mean, young adults. And investments,
16 investments in programming, investment in capital
17 investments as well. So the Council got work to do,
18 and we shouldn't be doing this work by ourselves. It
19 should be a partnership across the City.

20 In writing your report, what discussion
21 did you have with employers here in New York City,
and how would you judge their support for your five
ideas?

22 ELI DVORKIN: Yeah. Look, I think right
now employers still find it very challenging to
navigate this system, which really isn't a system,

3 it's an ecosystem, you could say, but it's incredibly
4 disparate and disconnected. And employers struggle
5 with that. Many employers, despite all the great work
6 that's happened in recent years, still don't really
7 know what is out there in New York City when it comes
8 to partnering with CUNY or the City or non-profit
9 organizations to develop the talent that they need.
10 Now, we have all these great examples of where those
11 partnerships have been forged, and, and Lauren
12 Anderson mentioned the Jobs CEO Council, you know, 29
13 of the largest companies not only in New York City,
14 but in the world that are partnering very effectively
15 with CUNY right now and hiring their graduates.
16 That's real progress, and that's just since 2020. But
17 that's 29 companies, you know. So, I hear Lauren's
18 goal about 6,000, you know, companies. Part of what
19 we're talking about with our idea of the Next 100 is
20 let's focus on the big companies that aren't part of
21 those 29 or aren't one of the very largest companies
that are already tapping into these pathways. There
are ample opportunities for that in New York City in
particular. No other city in North America has as
many large companies that aren't yet at the scale of
those 29, you know, and reaching more of them, 100 of

3 them, let's say, could open up thousands more career
4 pathways for New Yorkers in a time when we need that.

5 But employers need that partnership. They need an
6 intermediary that can help them navigate this
7 complicated system. They need some handholding
8 sometimes to be able to understand given my different
9 talent needs, where's the right place to turn, is it
10 an adult workforce training program, is it CUNY, help
11 me understand, which of the 26 CUNY colleges is the
12 right fit for what I need right now. CUNY is working
13 on that, but I think historically it's felt like you
14 want a system where there's no wrong door. And I
15 think for a lot of employers historically, it's felt
16 like there's no right door. The portal that that,
17 that Vice Chancellor Anderson is talking about is a
18 step in that direction, but it's really forging those
19 one-on-one relationships that brings employers in.

20 That's why we think this bigger initiative, like a
21 challenge-based procurement to create or to encourage
an existing intermediary to reach out to the next 100
major employers and bring them in as part of the
solution, as well as investing in things like those
critically important hybrid academic career advisor
roles at CUNY where they're doing the proactive

3 outreach to employers and the CRM system that CUNY
4 needs so that they can understand, hey, there's
5 somebody at LaGuardia Community College that has a
6 strong relationship with that hospital. So it's not
7 helpful if they're receiving, you know, 30 emails
8 from other colleges. They have a relationship there.
9 Let's make sure we can build on that relationship and
10 share it across the university. That's a tech problem
11 as well as being a bandwidth, a capacity problem.
12 CUNY's taken an initial step with some philanthropic
13 funding to get there, but infrastructure investment's
14 needed to help bring that to scale across the 26
15 colleges.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yes. You
17 mentioned the Council a lot in quite a few times you
18 mentioned the Council. So, what do you see the role
19 of the City Council in advocating for implementation
20 of your five ideas, supporting that implementation
21 financially, legislatively, or in other ways?

ELI DVORKIN: Absolutely. Well, thank you
so much for that question. I mean, first, I think a
budget ask here would be to invest in taking CUNY
Beyond to the next level. The good news here is that
CUNY is packaging together supports that have been

3 proven to work and has begun the process of
4 implementing that across CUNY, but the scale is vast
5 and the resources aren't there to be able to take it
6 to scale without a new level of investment from the
7 City. So, I think one key step in the right direction
8 and, as Vice Chancellor Anderson mentioned, the
9 Governor has put in a few million dollars to help
10 support this effort, but absolutely the City of New
11 York should come in, meet the State, you know, at
12 least meet the State halfway and potentially go
13 beyond that to ensure that that critically important
14 work is able to scale across CUNY. But I think
15 there's a couple of other areas where the Council's
16 already played such an important role. You know, we
17 mentioned a little bit earlier, heard a little bit
18 earlier about the ratios of advisors to students at
19 CUNY. And Council Member Epstein, I think, was sort
20 of surprised to hear, you know, the best we can do is
21 sort of 150 to 1. But the reality is that for many
colleges, the reality is 900 to 1, 1,000 to 1, 1,100
to 1. Those are realistic ratios for students that
aren't part of the ASAP program or the ACE program.
So one other very specific recommendation there that
the Council has championed in the past is let's take

3 those programs to scale. Now ASAP is getting close.

4 It's reaching about a third or so of community
5 college students every year. Clearly, there's still
6 room to grow, but by comparison, CUNY ACE, which
7 provides the supports of ASAP for senior college
8 students, is reaching just 3 percent of CUNY students
9 currently. So, bringing CUNY ACE, which provides
10 those very same supports, to the scale of ASAP is a
11 really specific thing that the City can do that would
12 dramatically improve access to advising, to supports
13 like an OMNY Card and support with technology costs
14 and books, and ultimately boost graduation rates.

15 The one other thing I'd mention is, you know, I think
16 there's a real role for the oversight function of the
17 Council here. I mean, understanding, and I heard
18 Executive Director Lipari talking about, you know,
19 there is already coordination work that NYC Talent is
20 doing, you know, absolutely. But currently the City's
21 workforce development dollars and functions are
spread across about two dozen different City
agencies. Those agencies report to four different
Deputy Mayors. So while it's certainly encouraging,
or , you know, we'll see how our new Deputy Mayor for
Economic Justice positions workforce development

3 within her portfolio, but the reality is much of the
4 workforce development work that the City engages in
5 happens outside of Deputy Mayor Su's portfolio. So, I
6 do think that one kind of important recommendation
7 there was the need to elevate that work to the
8 highest levels of City government. I think the
9 Council can play a key role there, either by helping
10 to create that role or certainly through the
11 oversight function to make sure that we're having a
12 conversation about economic mobility that includes
13 CUNY, as you are today, that includes K-12, that
14 includes adult workforce training and youth workforce
15 development and understands that that is spread out
16 across many different branches of City government,
17 and it doesn't all filter back up to one Deputy
18 Mayor, and that's part of the challenge. And then
19 just briefly, I think the last thing I would say is
20 the Council has been supportive of MetroCards for
21 students, obviously through Fair Fares and directly
to support that at CUNY. To me, that feels like one
of the most practical things the City Council can do
to boost outcomes at CUNY and for workforce training
programs more broadly who those participants don't
have access to the supports of an ASAP or an ACE, but

3 putting an OMNY Card into a participant in an
4 evidence-based workforce training program's hand or a
5 CUNY student's hand is a measurable benefit when it
6 comes to boosting completion rates and ultimately
7 helping them access that critically important first
8 job, and it's an area where the Council's shown its
9 spirit in the past, and it's a major opportunity, I
10 think, to align with with our Mayor around taking one
11 of the biggest barriers, affordability challenges
12 that CUNY students and workforce development
13 participants face, which is getting around the city,
14 taking that burden off of their plate and making it
15 easier for them to be able to persist and succeed in
16 CUNY and workforce training.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you for
18 that. And I see USS is shaking their head and that
19 was something we worked on with...

20 ELI DVORKIN: Shaking their head no?

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: No, in agreement,
in agreement, in agreement.

ELI DVORKIN: Okay, you shocked.

CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: That was something
we worked on with Council Member now Epstein, the way
we modeled the OMNY Card in making it four rides,

3 seven days a week, 365. That was one of the barriers
4 we removed. I know there's some students who were
5 left out. We're working on bringing them in, but I do
6 think CUNY is something I'm also advocating to see.
7 And one student stopped me at an event and was like
8 Council Member, I know what you did on the K-12
9 level. We need this up here on CUNY level.

10 ELI DVORKIN: Absolutely.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So, we definitely
12 need to work on it.

13 ELI DVORKIN: Coming from our K-12
14 schools, that's the support that you have as a high
15 school student in New York City, and it's one of many
16 things that gets stripped away when you get to CUNY,
17 but your circumstances haven't changed. It's not like
18 you've suddenly got all this income, disposable
19 income, and the ability to spend more of your free
20 time working, but those supports fall away and
21 they're in many cases not replaced, so it's such an
important action that the Council's taken, and we...

CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yes. So, we are
working with my Colleague, Assemblymember Hyndman, on
that issue together to make sure that CUNY is getting
around the city.

3 Thank you so much, Eli. It's always a
4 pleasure to see you. Thank you so much.

5 ELI DVORKIN: Thank you so much, Chair.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I look forward to
7 working with you.

8 ELI DVORKIN: Absolutely. Anything we can
9 do to help. Thank you.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: The next panel,
11 Rhoda Wilson, Akkeem Polack, Benjamin Wade, and Damir
12 Shavkatov. If I mispronounce, I just couldn't read
13 it.

14 All right. You may start.

15 AKKEEM POLACK: Okay. I'll start. Good
16 afternoon, Chair and Higher Education and Workforce
17 Development Committees. My name is Akkeem Polack,
18 Chairperson of the University Student Senate and CUNY
19 trustee representing more than 240,000 students
20 across 26 campuses. CUNY has always been a ladder of
21 opportunity for working-class and immigrant families,
but today a degree alone is not enough. Students are
not enrolling just for a diploma. We are enrolling
for economic mobility, stability for our families,
and a chance to build something better than what we
inherited. In 2004, the Center for an Urban Future's

3 CUNY on the Job report highlighted that CUNY's
4 growing role in workforce development. Since then,
5 workforce participation has become the central to
6 CUNY's mission. I agree with our Chancellor that CUNY
7 is not only about just getting a degree, but about
8 what happens after the degree. So the launch of CUNY
9 Beyond reflects that shift. Integrating career
10 connections into every stage of a student's academic
11 journey is the right direction, but we must be clear
12 about what is truly best for workforce development
13 within our campuses and beyond them.

14 Within campuses, workforce development
15 must be structured, not optional. Career advisement
16 must connect majors to real labour market outcomes.
17 Internships must be paid and accessible. Employer
18 engagement cannot be limited to occasional job fairs.
19 It must be embedded into curriculum, into classrooms,
20 and into credit-bearing experiences so that every
21 student graduates with practical exposure and real
connections.

22 Beyond campuses, we must strengthen the
23 process of seeking jobs itself. For too many
24 students, navigating applications, interviews, and
25 hiring systems feels disconnected and unclear. We

3 need defined pipelines into high-demand industries,
4 coordinated recruitment efforts, and employers who
5 see CUNY as a talent partner. Workforce development
6 should not end at graduation. Employers must also
7 invest in training. Jobs should not simply expect
8 experience, they should help build it. So we must
9 ask, what is truly best for college students when it
10 comes to work? It is preparation, yes. It is
11 opportunity, yes. But it's also access. You cannot
12 work at an internship if you cannot afford to get to
13 it. Transportation is not separate from workforce
14 development, it is foundational to it. If a student
15 can't afford the train, they cannot get to the
16 internship. That is why I urge this City Council to
17 fund the CUNY University Student Senate free OMNY
18 Card student commuter grant pilot program and to
19 fulfill CUNY's 700,000 request from the City to
20 launch it. This is not simply a transportation
21 initiative, it is a workforce access initiative. It
ensures that opportunity is not limited by OMNY Card
balance. (TIMER CHIME) CUNY students are ready to
work, lead, and build futures for ourselves and
families. Thank you.

3 RHODA WILSON: Good afternoon, Chairs and
4 Members of the Committee of the Higher Education and
5 Workforce Development. My name is Rhoda Wilson, and I
6 currently serve as the Vice Chair of Legislative
7 Affairs at the CUNY University Student Senate,
8 representing over 240,000 students across 26
9 campuses. I am also a student at the College of
10 Staten Island, majoring in communications with a
11 concentration in digital media and design. As an
12 immigrant student, CUNY has served as a beacon of
13 affordability and community that has provided me and
14 many others quality education that I don't believe
15 that I would have had the opportunity to experience
16 outside of the university and my home college. For
17 over 170 years, the CUNY system has built up a
18 worldwide reputation for being the stepping stone for
19 students in climbing up the socioeconomic class
20 structure through the many resources and
21 opportunities available. As we know, CUNY students
aren't just students, a lot of us are parents either
just starting out their families or searching for a
means of security to help protect their families.
Some are part-time and full-time workers. A lot of
them work more than one job to make ends meet. And on

3 top of all of that, our students still find a way to
4 fit in advocacy and showing up for their community
5 into their busy lives and schedules. To our students,
6 CUNY serves as a pathway into affordability. We
7 further our education in order to gain the experience
8 needed to move forward in life and join the
9 workforce. Most of our students tend to give back
10 through means of joining the city workforce. However,
11 it has become increasingly harder for students after
12 graduation to obtain the security of a City job. The
13 current feeling within campuses is a struggle and
14 fear of finding permanent, steady employment after
15 graduation. A lot of students have struggled through
16 their college career with finding internships,
17 especially those pertaining to their majors,
18 therefore missing out on core hands-on experience
19 within working spaces and their fields, affecting
20 their overall college experience and desirable skills
21 for employers. We must invest in making sure that
students are well prepared to give back to our city
through raising barriers that allow access to
internships, mentorships, fellowships. Embedding work
experience into curriculum and strengthening CUNY's
relationship with city-based employers are a must in

3 working towards a better future for all. Investing in
4 the preparation of workforce is important, but so is
5 investing in easing the access of transportation that
6 will help ensure students access to work
7 opportunities throughout the five boroughs. Access to
8 affordable transportation should not (TIMER CHIME) be
9 a wall that deters students from spreading all around
10 our city, sharing their skills for the betterment of
11 society. Many of us that do rely on the MTA travel
12 long distances that can sometimes go up to a
13 two-hour-long commute just to get to class and then
14 an internship/work opportunities. Using public
15 transportation is a necessity for us. However, the
16 ever-increasing fares for the buses and trains,
17 commuter costs have become an extremely unbearable
18 burden for our students. I believe that the pressing
19 issue of transportation affordability can be
20 addressed by CUNY through your support of the
21 University Student Senate's free OMNY Card student
commuter grant pilot program to fund free OMNY Cards
for CUNY students. Access to transportation is access
to education. A student who cannot afford an OMNY
Card cannot attend class. A student who cannot afford
to travel cannot take an internship, participate in

3 research, or engage in civic life and personal life.

4 Without reliable and affordable transportation,

5 students are forced to make impossible choices. Do I

6 go to class today, or do I save that swipe for work

7 so I can afford rent? This is a daily reality for too

8 many CUNY students and is one that New York City and

9 State have the power to change. CUNY has long been

10 the engine of social mobility for New York's working

11 class and immigration communities. Investing in CUNY

12 is investing in New York's future is essential. We

13 urge you to fund the free OMNY Cards for CUNY

14 students and continue investing in policies that

15 remove barriers to education for the sake and

16 betterment of our city and country. The return on

17 investment is clear. When students can afford to

18 access their education , they graduate, they

19 contribute to the economy, and they strengthen our

20 state. Thank you so much for giving me your time, and

21 I look forward to working together so that we can

ensure that every CUNY student gets the support they

need. Thank you.

DAMIR SHAVKATOV: First of all, I want to

say good afternoon and thank you so much for the

committees on workforce development and higher

3 education for this opportunity to speak with you
4 today. My name is Damir Shavkatov, and I'm a proud
5 Brooklyn College student and the Vice Chair for
6 Senior College Affairs for the CUNY University
7 Student Senate, representing over 160,000 students
8 across our 11 CUNY schools. For CUNY students,
9 aligning higher education with workforce demand is
10 not just a policy phrase. It is a daily reality. Many
11 of us are full-time students, part-time workers,
12 caretakers, as well as commuters, and
13 first-generation students, and in many cases, the
14 primary source of income for our families. We are
15 already in the workforce, but the real question is
16 whether our time at CUNY intentionally prepares us
17 for stable career-track jobs in New York City's
18 growing industries, or if we are left to figure it
19 out on our own. Right now, too many opportunities
20 function like a lottery. If you're in the right
21 campus, in the right major, linked to the right
program, you may get access to those structured
pathways, internships, mentorship, as well as
industry-aligned coursework. I want to ground this
experience of students I represent whose identities I
will keep anonymous. One student is the first in his

3 family to attend college and lives in a crowded
4 apartment with relatives. They work night in service
5 jobs and attend classes during the day, hoping to
6 enter the healthcare field. Despite strong grades,
7 they have no clear pathway from classroom to career,
8 and unpaid internships are simply not an option when
9 missing shift means missing rent. Another student
10 spends over two hours each way commuting on multiple
11 trains because they cannot afford to live closer to
12 campus. As a result, they regularly miss class and
13 key campus events, including recruiting sessions and
14 networking opportunities that are simply not
15 scheduled with community students in mind. A third
16 student, a computer science major at a campus without
17 a flagship tech pipeline, watches their peers at
18 private institutions receive structured mentorship
19 and interview prep while they rely on sporadic club
20 events and mass job applications.

21 To change this, we need City support that
turns isolated opportunities into a consistent,
accessible system. We urge you to invest in expanding
career service capacity across all community campuses
so that every student has access to individualized
guidance, employer connection, and career-relevant

3 programming regardless of their major or even
4 location. We also ask you to support the CUNY
5 University Student Senate's priorities like funding
6 free OMNY Cards pilot program so that students can
7 reliably reach class, jobs, and internships, and
8 strengthening CUNY Cares and related basic needs so
9 that housing and food insecurity do not force
10 students to choose between survival and career
11 development. These investments increase accessibility
12 for low-income, working, and community students
13 (TIMER CHIME) and ensure that CUNY's promises of
14 social mobility is matched by clear, supported,
15 pathways by New York City workforce. Thank you for
16 your time and your commitment to CUNY students.

17 BENJAMIN WADE: Good afternoon, and thank
18 you to the Committees on Higher Education and
19 Workforce Development for the opportunity to speak
20 today. My name is Benjamin Wade, and I am a student
21 at John Jay College, and I represent the University
Student Senate. CUNY is often called the engine of
social mobility, but for that engine to function, the
gears between the classroom and the workforce must
actually connect. Currently, that connection is
slipping. The gap between our education and the

3 careers that we seek is widening, and it is the
4 students who are paying the price for that friction.
5 The City has the data and knows what works. When
6 students are paired with actual industry mentors and
7 startups, they are three times more likely to have a
8 job upon graduation. This is not theory. This is
9 proven return on investment for our city. Yet, we
10 treat these programs like boutiques, exclusive
11 programs that only serve a fraction of our students.
12 We cannot properly address minority unemployment in
13 this city while at the same time CUNY's most
14 effective career pipelines such as the CUNY 2X Tech
15 remain gated off from the majority of our campuses.
16 We need a system that is accessible to many, not just
17 exceptional for a few. We are past the point of
18 handshakes and promises, and we are here for
19 investment and commitment. This is why I would like
20 for the City Council to help scale the CUNY 2X Tech
21 model, because we need this pipeline expanded
immediately into specific industries such as
healthcare, finance, and the green economy. It is
time to increase accessibility and treat this program
like the City's critical economic infrastructure that
it is. Furthermore, I would like to ask the City to

3 help us advocate for 4.6 million dollars to expand
4 the CUNY Cares to all five boroughs within the city.
5 It is because these workforce pipelines are only as
6 effective as they should be when built on a stable
7 foundation. We need a university-wide expansion of
8 CUNY Cares to address food and housing insecurity
9 that threatens retention rates before students ever
10 even reach the workforce. Lastly, I would like to
11 urge the City Council to help CUNY fulfill its
12 700,000 request to launch a free OMNY Card pilot
13 program through the University Student Senate OMNY
14 Card Student Commuter Grant Pilot Program, because
15 you simply cannot work a job that you cannot afford
16 to get to. If you want a city that works, you have to
17 invest in students who are doing the work. Don't just
18 give us a degree and a handshake, give us the gears
19 to move our city forward. Thank you for your time and
20 commitment to CUNY students.

21
CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. I have
one question for each of you. When you started at
CUNY, did you expect to be prepared to enter the
workforce and get a good-paying job upon graduation?
Are you on track to do that?

3 BENJAMIN WADE: I'm sorry. May you please
4 repeat the question?

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Absolutely. When
6 you started at CUNY, did you expect to be prepared to
7 enter the workforce and get a good-paying job upon
8 graduation? Are you on track to do that?

9 BENJAMIN WADE: So, I did expect CUNY with
10 the means of being able to get a job, a well-paying
11 job after I graduate, and I believe that I am on
12 track of doing that. However, I also realize that
13 it's important for students to know what resources
14 the end goal ends up being able to provide you
15 because I realize that a lot of students, they end up
16 trying to have access to jobs that they are able to
17 get, but then once they reach that position, they
18 realize that the pay or the wage isn't enough, or
19 there's not enough benefits for them to utilize once
20 they reach that position. So, I hope that the career
21 that I'm looking to get into does also support me in
that way.

AKKEEM POLACK: And what I'll say is when
I started CUNY, I expected — because it's in New York
City, you know one of the largest economies in the
world — I expected I would get one of the top jobs on

3 Wall Street, or let's say, you know, somewhere in
4 Midtown. However, I soon realized that that was not
5 the case, you know, from issues surrounding academic
6 advisement to career advisement, that support was
7 really lacking and in some cases still is, and I am
8 still confident though, because CUNY, we do have a
9 great community of people who really want to see each
10 student succeed. However, some of the systems just
11 sadly don't work, and I'm hoping those things get
12 fixed. So I'm more leaning towards being confident
13 now that, you know, I'm going to graduate and
14 everything will work out, but I do see when I started
15 that optimism I had it kind of dwindled.

16 RHODA WILSON: When I started as a
17 freshman in college, I was actually not sure what I
18 wanted to do or what my end result was. I was pushed
19 into it. I knew I wanted to go to college, but I was
20 pushed into going specifically to the College of
21 Staten Island by my mother to just stay within the
family. And I started out as a computer science
major, and I remember my first semester being one of
my worst semesters because I wasn't sure how I would
get to the path of game design, which was what I
originally wanted to do aside from transferring over

3 to communications and the fear of not having someone
4 to talk to, or either my advisor not knowing fully a
5 lot about my major. That was pretty hard, even though
6 I am an ASAP student and I did have my advisor more
7 handy than the rest of the other students, which I am
8 thankful for, but that was a struggle for me. But
9 thankfully, I was able to find centers on campus that
10 guided me through changing my major and finding
11 something I'm more comfortable with, most especially,
12 like, the Women's Center on my campus was was a big
13 help.

14 DAMIR SHAVKATOV: For my part coming into
15 college, I didn't expect to, like, be geared towards
16 that. I only thought that college provides education
17 and not really workforce development. But as a
18 college freshman, I did an internship in the
19 community career launch, and last summer I did an
20 internship at Aon, just like three blocks from here.
21 But there are students who know that this is very
competitive, and I'm speaking on behalf of them
because they don't have necessarily resources for
them to go to their career center, get their resume
checked, cover letter, as well as do mock job

3 interviews, which are really important to get a job
4 after graduation.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay. Thank you.
6 Thank you all.

7 Timothy Cecere and Gregory Morris. Okay.

8 TIMOTHY CECERE: Hello. Good morning.
9 Think you can hear me well? Yeah? Okay.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I can hear you.

11 TIMOTHY CECERE: So, I feel like a bit of
12 an outsider because obviously I'm not a CUNY school,
13 St. Francis College, but we do share some of the same
14 issues. As a matter of fact, many of the same issues.
15 And I have learned quite a bit today just listening,
16 and hopefully some of what I'll share with you today
17 will be helpful as well because we do share the same
18 communities, the same employers, the same issues. So,
19 I appreciate this opportunity, Madam Chair and
20 Council, to share this with you.

21 So, good morning. Today I come before you
as the President of St. Francis College, a 160 years
young institution rooted in faith and mission that
transcends classrooms, laboratories, and textbooks.
In deep consideration of this new era of accelerated
technological innovations, this Committee is right to

3 inquire how St. Francis College is preparing students
4 for relevant and sustainable careers. Guided by
5 timeless Franciscan values through shifting societal
6 norms, coupled with the knock-on effect of economic
7 volatility, we equip students to successfully
8 navigate this journey with Magellan-like
9 determination. The response to your inquiry lies not
10 in our traditional curriculum or modality trends, but
11 in our unique approach to blending faith, family,
12 community, investment, and progressive common sense.
13 By progressive common sense, I mean the nurturing of
14 the uniquely human aspiration to gather information,
15 form ideas, eliminate impediments, and bring an end
16 to imposed pain and suffering while respecting the
17 integrity of a collective and civilized society in
18 harmony with individual rights. An example of this is
19 our current 12-part LinkedIn series on accessibility
20 and accommodation strategies, tools, and techniques
21 for students and adults dealing with challenges of
physical disabilities. This series is compiled in
collaboration with our recent graduate, Jessica, who
was born with cerebral palsy and has spent her entire
life in a wheelchair. We share her lived experience
and the experiences of others in her network with the

3 general population. Jessica is a great writer, and
4 talent is a limited resource. Talent is a limited
5 resource. So, we must create pathways for all to
6 participate in forming a more perfect and just
7 society. St. Francis College has no fewer than 15
8 mental health counselors addressing the psychological
9 and emotional struggles that many in our society are
10 facing. Mental health care is foundational to
11 managing the daily rigors required for a college
12 degree. Just to put that in perspective, we've got
13 1,700 or so undergraduate students and 15 mental
14 health counselors. So, those ratios are fairly
15 favorable for the students, and it's working.

16 A word on faith and technology. Our faith
17 foundation contextualizes human technological
18 advancements as gifts from God. (TIMER CHIME) In a
19 world where the impact of AI dominates headlines, our
20 students are taught that technology is not bad, but
21 people can be bad at technology when they act without
ethics and integrity. AI and blockchain
infrastructure hold the potential to cure cancer,
feed the hungry, house the homeless, foster world
peace, save our environment, democratize education,
and create the blueprint of a better world. At the

3 same time, it can destroy, corrupt, reduce, isolate,
4 and marginalize entire populations. The choice of how
5 we effectuate technology is ours. Through courses
6 integrating our faith and values with business,
7 science, and the arts, we openly contemplate these
8 obvious contradictions: profit versus compassion,
9 morality versus innovation, and philosophy versus
10 routines of daily living. It is our belief that
11 employers will highly value this combination of soft
12 skills like empathy and compassion with
13 decision-making qualities requiring abstract thinking
14 and cost-benefit analysis. These skills in particular
15 are crucial to advancing from entry-level to more
16 senior-level positions across the board. By embedding
17 faith and reflection, we cultivate resilience. Our
18 students do not fear change, they help shape it,
19 which flips uncertainty over to opportunity. In 2023,
20 St. Francis College took a closer look at the
21 education we provided to our students, the community,
our hospital partners, and our corporate partners. We
identified our true role within the context of these
systems. We are clearly not outside of these systems,
and our outcomes are not separate. Our tuition had to
align with the economic realities of our students'

3 return on investment in their education, and our
4 orientation needed to shift from leading with liberal
5 arts to liberal arts and humanities accompanying,
6 assisting, informing, and guiding more hardwired
7 college-level disciplines across nursing, radiology,
8 accounting, computer science, and on and on. At
9 first, our professors resisted, and this is
10 understandable because for a very long time the world
11 was perfectly suited and in urgent need of their
12 expertise as leading disciplines. Accordingly, we
13 explored the workforce needs of the local and global
14 communities and worked backwards to develop students
15 that fit those needs, rather than presenting what we
16 traditionally taught and then saying to the
17 community, "Good luck to you and the students." Soon
18 it became obvious that our success aligns with this
19 important shift. Our liberal arts core now emphasizes
20 critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving
21 skills as they relate to career success. Indeed, we
teach digital humanities paired with internships as
students gain experiential learning in fields like
healthcare technology, accounting, computer science,
science security, healthcare informatics, and on. We
combined our academic advising department with our

3 career development department. It's all one because
4 it leads to the same goal, an education leading to a
5 career. It's the same conversation.

6 Lastly, I would like to discuss the cost
7 of a college education. It is my hope that very soon
8 independent colleges like mine can move past the
9 price tag discount game plaguing so many graduates
10 who have paid for degrees that are unmarketable. They
11 have loans they cannot repay, totaling 1.8 trillion
12 dollars nationally, which, by the way, is more than
13 twice the U.S. military budget and growing. In the
14 end, it's the colleges that got the money, not the
15 students. Students feel betrayed by universities with
16 glossy marketing materials and contrived mission
17 statements that prioritize romance over return on
18 investment. The out-of-pocket cost of a college
19 education for the average working-class student needs
20 to be commensurate with the expected income level
21 derived by the degree if finances and college choice
are of a concern for the student and their family,
and most are. We recently received an independent
data recognition by the American Council on Education
and the Carnegie Foundation recognizing St. Francis
College for exemplary demonstration of alignment with

3 mission, workforce readiness, and accreditation
4 standards translating to higher access, higher
5 earnings, and better outcomes. I would ask that the
6 next inquiry investigation is why colleges charge
7 what they charge for a four-year degree and how that
8 is reconciled with the amount of government
9 assistance their students receive. I welcome my
10 colleagues at private universities to join us in this
11 tuition conversation.

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Lastly, I just want to say that on
economies of scale, I'm about 3 percent your size, so
I know that some things are possible where I am, but
the ideas and the concepts I believe are very
translatable. And one of the things I always say is
you can't scale complexity, you can only scale
simplicity. And a lot of the testimony I heard today
sounded very complex, and I don't know if you can
scale that level of complexity. So, thank you for
your time today. I appreciate it.

GREGORY MORRIS: Thank you very much for
this time. My name is Greg Morris. I'm the CEO of the
New York City Employment and Training Coalition.
Chair Joseph, it's great to see you. We are the
largest workforce development association in the

3 country. We have workforce development providers in
4 the room. We also have folks online, our
5 communications channel encouraging folks to be
6 present in this conversation. I know that there are
7 folks online and continue to be online listening in
8 today. We want to thank the Council for the launch of
9 the Workforce Development Committee and that the
10 Higher Ed Committee and the Workforce Development
11 Committee worked together at this time was critical,
12 valuable, important, and extraordinarily meaningful.
13 I'm not going to do my testimony. That's already been
14 submitted online. I'm not going to worry about that.
15 I'm just going to kind of pivot a little bit to a
16 couple things that maybe we didn't get to talk about
17 or questions that weren't quite asked during the
18 course of the hearing that I think would be
19 beneficial to lean in on. And first, I'll say this
20 Chair Joseph, as well as other Council Members,
21 you've been part of the convenings, the briefings,
the roundtables that we do in our communications
channel. We had our last conference in December. We
had 400 workforce development providers in the room.
We had 1,000 people watching online. Our theme of
that conference was affordability is workforce

3 policy, and the opening speakers on both days, it was
4 the SUNY Chancellor one day and the CUNY Chancellor
5 the next day, because we know that CUNY in the
6 private college space is an engine. I just want to
7 note a couple of things. When we talk about workforce
8 development, job training, work readiness, it may be
9 beneficial for us to reframe that as an employer
10 solution. And by being an employer solution, we can
11 support individual economic mobility and the city's
12 economic growth. And that's very important at this
13 particular moment as it aligns with worker rights and
14 economic justice, which I know this Administration is
15 focused on. I also want to highlight the
16 intersectionality of the conversation that has taken
17 place today with panelists and your guests. We've
18 talked about everything from K-12 education to higher
19 education to the green economy. We've talked about
20 transportation. We've talked about healthcare. We've
21 talked about OMNY Cards. Workforce development is
really a conversation that's a bit of a triangle.
It's training. It's career advancement. It's those
supportive services that allow folks to stay in
place. But none of that happens without employer
investment and being an employer solution. I also

3 want to note the audiences that we didn't talk about
4 today who we should be particularly worried about.
5 Young adults who are out of school, out of work. We
6 didn't get to talk about that today. Folks who need
7 to reskill and upskill. CUNY touched on that, but
8 there are a lot of New Yorkers who need additional
9 skills, especially those in labor. Those with unique
10 vulnerabilities who are resilient but need more
11 individual-focused attention. These are the providers
12 that our 220 organizations focus their energy on. We
13 also didn't get to talk about work requirements
14 related to SNAP, which are going to launch in full in
15 New York City shortly. That's going to be very
16 challenging. We scratched the surface on stopouts. We
17 need to do more of that, meaning folks who have
18 credits but not enough to graduate. We need to get
19 back to that.

20 The last couple things I'll say
21 resourcing the pathway to a career is (TIMER CHIME)
going to require this Council to invest. And if you
look at discretionary funding over the course of
time, workforce development has not received much
movement and folks have had a very hard time breaking
into that. Our Putting Our Dollars to Work report,

3 which I think will be a good complement to the CUF
4 report, tells the story of where dollars have gone in
5 this Administration, largely to DYCD and SYEP, which
6 is a great outlet, but only a handful of those folks
7 find career pathways. The last thing I'll say is
8 this. I have great admiration and respect for the NYC
9 Talent team, the CUNY team. Vice Chancellor Anderson
10 is phenomenal. I just will say this about the NYC
11 Talent Team. You noted it. They have a
12 2.7-million-dollar budget, and they have to wrangle
13 30 programs within two dozen agencies. I would
14 suggest to you that's a tremendous lift and something
15 that this Council needs to think about when it comes
16 to urgency, accountability, inclusivity,
17 sustainability. And the last note that we didn't
18 cover, which I'm sure we'll want to have in a future
19 hearing, is Workforce Pell, which is a pathway to
20 folks getting access to dollars that would allow them
21 to get the training credentials they need. And CUNY,
I know, is trying to figure that out in relation to
the state and the feds. I know you will champion that
conversation because it's a tremendous pathway for
New Yorkers, whether their future is all about

3 teaching or any of the other ways in which folks find
4 good careers in New York City. Thank you.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much.
6 And I do agree, and we didn't even get a chance to
7 touch on our vulnerable population, our students in
8 foster care. And, you know, that's a...

9 GREG MORRIS: 100 percent.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Our homeless youth
11 and also our vulnerable. So we didn't get a chance to
12 touch that. I'm sure Regina was already planning our
13 next hearing on those topics, so we will definitely
14 touch. But I wanted today to be the start of a
15 conversation that hasn't happened in a long time so
16 this is the start of a conversation, and we want to
17 continue to build and work with you. St. Francis,
18 that's my alma mater, so I'm a little biased.

19 TIMOTHY CECERE: Shoutout to St. Francis,
20 of course.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I'm a little
22 biased, but I'm looking forward not to just leave St.
23 Francis out, but to include you in this conversation
24 along with CUNY and SUNY because we are doing the
25 same work. The pipeline come from the same source so
26 definitely have to include you in conversation.

3 TIMOTHY CECERE: That's right. You
4 mentioned you were big on data, and so am I.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yes.

6 TIMOTHY CECERE: We share many students
7 back and forth as transfers with the CUNY system. One
8 thing I'd like to see is the success rate of students
9 who transfer from St. Francis to CUNY, four-year,
10 six-year graduation, as opposed to students who
11 transfer from CUNY to St. Francis. What's the
12 difference?

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Correct.

14 TIMOTHY CECERE: What's working? What's
15 not working?

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Absolutely.

17 TIMOTHY CECERE: If I just may say one
18 more thing, you mentioned you have 250,000-some-odd
19 students in the CUNY system. LinkedIn has a billion
20 global users, profiles, a quarter of a billion right
21 in the United States. LinkedIn would love to get your
data on your students, create profiles of what your
students are majoring in and learning, do a study
with employers to see how that aligns. They'll get
new unique users, and you'll get the benefit of a job
stream and data and information on how to place and

3 teach students because, as you mentioned, the
4 employers need to come to you as well. So, matching
5 that together, that amount of data would be
6 incredible because it is the currency of employment
7 mostly in the United States.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yes. Thank you.

9 GREG MORRIS: I just want to add it's our
10 college network, it's our tremendous workforce
11 development providers, it's our on-the-ground folks
12 that are really economic mobility hubs, and they're
13 the economic engines that support communities,
14 neighborhoods, and individuals, and I look forward to
15 standing with you and the folks that have been in the
16 room and the coalition that's on this call and
17 listening into this hearing to work with you to
18 ensure that all these pathways are in place no matter
19 what someone's starting point is.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yep. I agree 1,000
21 percent.

Thank you both. Thank you so much.

On Zoom, Kalani Leifer Leifer.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

20 KALANI LEIFER: Thank you. Can you hear me
21 all right?

2 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yes, I can.

3 KALANI LEIFER: Wonderful. Well, thank you
4 so much for the opportunity to join you all. My name
5 is Kalani Leifer. I'm the CEO of COOP Careers, a
6 non-profit I founded in New York City in 2014. I'm
7 also a proud alum of Lehman College and CUNY, the
8 greatest urban university in the world.

9 Over the last decade, COOP has supported
10 more than 10,000 first-generation and low-income
11 college graduates on their journey from
12 underemployment to upward mobility. I began my own
13 career as a high school history teacher in the Bronx.
14 I taught my students that if they work hard, played
15 by the rules, and earned a bachelor's degree, they
16 would secure a foothold in the middle class. Many did
17 exactly that. They completed college, often the first
18 in their families to do so, only to face constant
19 rejection in the white-collar job market. My students
20 did everything we asked of them, but they have not
21 realized the promise of higher education. Today in
New York City, nearly one in five college graduates
faces material hardship, such as food or housing
insecurity. Nationally, 1 million Pell-eligible
students earn a bachelor's degree each year. One year

3 later, more than half are underemployed, working in
4 low-wage roles that don't require the degree they
5 just earned. A decade later, three in four of those
6 underemployed graduates remain stuck in
7 underemployment. First-gen graduates and Pell Grant
8 recipients are far more likely more likely to fall
9 into the underemployment trap. In other words, those
10 with the most riding on the college degree are the
11 least likely to see the payoff. This is not a failure
12 of aspiration or effort. It's a structural gap. While
13 we have rightly expanded access to higher education,
14 no institution currently owns the transition from
15 college to career. Higher education was not designed
16 or funded to ensure career attachment after
17 graduation. As a result, the burden of the transition
18 falls to graduates and their personal networks,
19 reinforcing inequities that the City has worked so
20 hard to address through its college access and
21 persistence efforts. COOP has demonstrated young
folks can overcome underemployment with the right
skills and relationships in the critical years after
graduation. Underemployed graduates who participate
in our intensive fellowship secure college-level
employment at more than twice the rate of their

3 peers. The challenge is not creating a solution, but
4 designing a public system that can scale it. But
5 there's some good news, as Eli shared. Beginning this
6 fall, our federal government will take an important
7 step in that direction. Eligible college graduates
8 will be able to use remaining Pell Grant funds for
9 short-term workforce-aligned credentials, creating a
10 real pathway to connect degrees..

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

12 KALANI LEIFER: All right. I'll leave it
13 there. But really excited for the City to focus on
14 Workforce Pell.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much.
16 Thank you. We look forward to working with you and
17 hearing more of your ideas. So, thank you.

18 Is there anyone else on Zoom? If you are,
19 raise your hands so Sergeant-at-Arms can call on you.

20 I see no hands.

21 Thank you all for joining us today, and I
conclude this hearing. [GAVEL]

3 C E R T I F I C A T E

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5
6 World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing
7 transcript is a true and accurate record of the
8 proceedings. We further certify that there is no
9 relation to any of the parties to this action by blood
10 or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome
11 of this matter.



17 Date April 15, 2026

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