

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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November 20, 2008

Start: 1:15pm

Recess: 2:30pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E: CHARLES BARRON
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Tony Avella
Gale Brewer
Miguel Martinez

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

Dean James
Vice President of University Affairs
City College of New York, CUNY

Kareem Morales
President
Bronx Community College Student Government
Association

Monique Lewis
Legal Legislative Representative
Bronx Community College's Student Government
Association

Francisca Villar
Senator
Bronx Community College Student Government
Association

Allan Dobrin
Executive Vice Chancellor, Chief Operating Officer
City University of New York

Ernesto Malave
Vice Chancellor for Budget and Finance
City University of New York

Iris Weinshall
Vice Chancellor for Facilities, Planning,
Construction and Management
City University of New York

Steve London
Professional Staff Congress
CUNY

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CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Good

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afternoon. My name is Councilman Charles Barron,

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I'm Chair of the Higher Education Committee and

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this is our budget hearing on the impact of the

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budget cuts, pegs from the City Council and also

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the tuition increases proposed by the Governor of

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New York State. This hearing is to discuss and go

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over and hear what this impact will be on CUNY and

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what CUNY administration intends to do about it.

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We'll hear from some students as well so that

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people will understand the impact that it had on

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them. I'll read my opening statement for the

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record and then we'll begin right away.

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Our first panel will be a panel of

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students and then we'll bring the administration

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on thereafter. With me is the faithful and loyal

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CUNY fighter, Council Member Tony Avella from

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Queens, we always thank him. I want to also and

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always thank Shadaan from the Finance Department

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for particularly in putting together the opening

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presentation and the analysis of the budget impact

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for us. And Tracy Udell who is our counselor and

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Miss Sirius, we thank you so much for policy

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analyst and all the work that you do. This is a

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2 team in here. In my hearings we allow for hand
3 claps so please give my team a big hand clap for
4 all the work that they do, make me appear smart.

5 [Applause]

6 Good morning and welcome to our
7 hearing on the fiscal 2009 November plan and its
8 impact on CUNY. Today we will be reviewing the
9 November plan as it affects the City University of
10 New York for fiscal year 2009. Allen Dobrin,
11 Chief Operating Officer and Ernesto Malave, Vice
12 Chancellor for Budget and Finance have been
13 invited to testify before the Committee on the
14 behalf of the administration's proposed reductions
15 to CUNY's expense and the capital budgets and
16 their impact on CUNY's students, faculty,
17 administrative services and staffing.

18 I also want to acknowledge my
19 assistant in my office. The one who really keeps
20 me up on all of these issues. Please give her a
21 big hand clap, Miss Joy Simmons, who does great
22 work.

23 [Applause]

24 I would appreciate just a little
25 more volume in the hand claps. I measure the

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2 volume of hand claps.

3 [Applause]

4 Thank you very much. This is
5 greatly appreciated. Miguel that was not for you,
6 that was for the people who were here already but
7 he knows how to come in at the right time when
8 people are applauding. I want to also welcome
9 another member of our Committee, Miguel Martinez
10 from Manhattan. Give him a big hand clap for the
11 work he does at CUNY.

12 [Applause]

13 Here we are in the midst of a
14 global recession, Wall Street meltdown and
15 foreclosure nightmare. Although we did some
16 preparation for this tumultuous moment, it was not
17 enough. Now our most vulnerable population is
18 affected the hardest by these difficult economic
19 times. With CUNY, running a \$12.8 million deficit
20 from fiscal year 2008 in it's operating costs,
21 CUNY has had to do hiring freezes, staff layoffs,
22 slight reductions of critical services to its
23 students. Now the administration is asking for
24 more cuts and so whatever that fat that CUNY had
25 it's already given it up.

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What the administration is now asking CUNY is to cut the actual meat, class offerings, full time faculty, positions, class sizes, counseling, tutoring, special programming and scholarship money. Administration is not alone in its butchering of CUNY services. The state is proposing additional cuts to CUNY in this fiscal year as well. Along with this cutting, the state is proposing tuition increases. However, why should students pay for a cow to only receive instead a calf.

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With access to credit lines closing, scholarship funding dwindling, increased cost of living and rising unemployment, CUNY institutions have provided quality educational substance and nourishment to these vulnerable populations. Now with these reductions, it is making it harder for these institutions to continue to provide that quality substance and nourishment.

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Although we are in rough times, I ask the administration and the state to take a hard look at what you're cutting. Across the board cutting has become an exercise of futility

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2 for this city. When we had the opportunity to do
3 more fiscally, be more fiscally prudent, we did
4 not. Instead of slashing vital services such as
5 higher education, health care, education and
6 housing, I asked the administration and the state
7 to take the same time to take the time while we
8 still can and do more of a surgical approach to
9 cutting for fiscal savings.

10 Also, the administration and the
11 state should match their cut package with a
12 revenue generating package but not one that solely
13 focuses on raising property tax. How about taxing
14 the rich, the millionaires who can afford it? As
15 the Chair of this committee, I'm tire of
16 continual, across the board cuts to CUNY's budget.
17 This must end and give CUNY students what they
18 rightly deserve, a good education without the
19 stress of worrying about how much it will cost.

20 The Committee looks forward to
21 hearing how the CUNY administration intends to
22 cover operational cost to maintain its various
23 institutions and still provide the services CUNY
24 students need to matriculate. It is a true
25 tragedy, however, our community colleges

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2 continually remain under funded each fiscal year
3 but the administration looks to these institutions
4 for training, workforce development, remediation
5 efforts and educational access.

6 On a more happier note, the
7 Committee is pleased to announce and to hear how
8 Fidderman Hall is finally fully funded with a
9 commitment from the administration to be completed
10 by 2012. Let's give Fidderman Hall and the BMCC
11 students a big hand clap for that.

12 [Applause]

13 Thank everyone who has come here
14 today and now we will hear the first testimony
15 from our student panel. We ask that they come
16 forth and I hope you don't mind if we allow the
17 students to go first. I just heard some moving
18 testimony by them and I think you might want to
19 even hear this as well.

20 CLERK: Dean James, Monique Lewis,
21 Kareem Morales and Francesca Villar. Please raise
22 your right hands. Do you swear or affirm that the
23 testimony you're about to give is, to the best of
24 your knowledge, truthful and accurate.

25 ALL: Yes.

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2 CLERK: Please keep your testimony
3 to two minutes each. Thank you.

4 DEAN JAMES: You'll have to excuse
5 me. I'm not much of one for public speaking. My
6 name is Dean James, I serve as the Vice President
7 of University Affairs for City College of New
8 York, part of the CUNY system. I'm here to
9 represent the students that I feel will be
10 dramatically affected by the proposed hike in
11 tuition.

12 Most of my constituents are
13 immigrants and students from also inner city who
14 aren't able to afford an education anywhere else.
15 They entered City College because of the low
16 tuition that was once free and they struggled to
17 make it every day. They have to find a way to
18 balance increasing hours at work along with their
19 duties at school as students. This would only
20 make it even more difficult for them to do so.

21 There's not one student in my
22 school who wouldn't do wonderfully anywhere else
23 if they had the time as students at other colleges
24 do to study, to prepare for exams and their
25 homeworks. As it is they do a phenomenal job as

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2 you can see by their academic records. But by
3 increasing the tuition, you will be increasing the
4 number of hours they will have to work therefore
5 affecting them unduly. Forcing them to make a
6 decision whether or not it's even worthwhile for
7 them to continue with their educations and I feel
8 that that would be a mistake.

9 A second education in this country
10 is a requirement in order to get anywhere in life.
11 By increasing the tuition you will be unfairly
12 affecting them. Thank you.

13 KAREEM MORALES: Good afternoon
14 ladies and gentlemen of the Committee. My name is
15 Kareem Morales and I am the President of the Bronx
16 Community College Student Government Association.
17 As the president I serve a constituency of those
18 who are mostly under financed. They have the
19 inability to pay for education as is and these
20 tuition increases will be extremely detrimental to
21 their well-being as well as to their ability to
22 access higher education.

23 I was reading these highlights. It
24 said that the \$600 dollars or the 15% is a partial
25 increase, which means that this doesn't even

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2 highlight the full devastation that these students
3 are likely to face, which I believe will be
4 extremely detrimental to our student body. I
5 would say believe but this is a fact.

6 Most of our students, not most of
7 them but maybe 15% to 20% will most likely have to
8 drop out of college because they can not pay.
9 These are students coming from foreign
10 backgrounds. These are students coming from
11 backgrounds where they have to pay for college out
12 of pocket. These students include students such
13 as myself, who pay out of pocket every single year
14 in cash for tuition.

15 These increases are devastating.
16 Make no mistake that these increases will damage
17 the likelihood of these students forever. I talk
18 to single mothers, mothers who manage children on
19 a daily basis, in addition to single households,
20 bills, countless bills. They do not need this. I
21 talk to students who range from backgrounds from
22 many foreign countries. These students do not
23 need this. Their tuition isn't subsidized as is;
24 they pay a higher tuition as is. These increases
25 are likely to increase that tuition and they will

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not be able to afford higher education.

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As the student government president of Bronx Community College, I can not allow this.

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We will do everything to make sure that these

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students have the funding, this is why we are

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here. Because we realize that the tuition

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increases are extremely detrimental to our student

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body. It will damage not only the students who

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are currently enrolled in CUNY but the students

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who come behind them and the generations who come

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behind them.

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I believe that this tuition

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increase shows a direct contempt for our student

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body. It shows a disregard for this city's future

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and thus shows a disregard for our nation's

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future. I believe we saw what the President of

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the United States, we experimented with the

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uneducated. We do not want to do this again.

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Thank you.

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MONIQUE LEWIS: Good afternoon. My

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name is Monique Lewis and I am the Legal

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Legislative rep for Bronx Community College's

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Student Government Association as well the

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University Student Senate Vice Chair for

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2 Technology Fees. I'm here today to say that I am
3 very, very disappointed in CUNY's faith in our
4 students because raising our tuition, making us
5 pay more money than we can already afford shows
6 you don't have any faith in us getting 3.5, 4.0s.

7 I am a mother of five children
8 ranging from the ages of 21 to 4 years old. I
9 have to tell you that as I've had a discussion
10 last night with my daughter, my 14 year old child
11 who should only be worrying about if she's doing
12 her homework or if she's going to cheerleading
13 practice on time. Her concern is Mommy, am I
14 going to be able to go to school, am I going to be
15 able to go to college? I should not have to quell
16 those fears in my children.

17 I should not have to worry if
18 myself, being not only a resident of public
19 housing but also a recipient of public assistance.
20 I had a plan. I had a plan not to be receiving
21 any type of public assistance by next year. And
22 now my plan is destroyed and I have to reformat
23 this because I don't know if I'm going to be able
24 to afford to take care of my children as well as
25 further my education. This is unfair.

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2 I bust my behind every day. I have
3 at least a 3.5 GPA, with five kids and one of them
4 is disabled. Shouldn't I see some type of faith
5 in my education? Shouldn't I not have to worry
6 that my diploma is not going to be worth more than
7 the tissue paper that's in my bathroom?

8 My fellow students that I represent
9 here, they are really worried as my student body
10 president has stated. A lot of our students are
11 going to have to drop out of school. And we're
12 they're representatives. I promise them, I
13 promise you, I promise the Mayor, I promise the
14 Governor that I'm going to do everything in my
15 strength to fight this to my dying breath. Thank
16 you.

17 FRANCESCA VILLAR: Good afternoon
18 Committee, good afternoon fellow constituents. My
19 name is Francesca Villar. I'm also a Senator with
20 Bronx Community College Student Government. I'm a
21 pre-med student and I am also a mother of two
22 children. I'm also a part time worker. I rely on
23 CUNY because I work through federal work study so
24 that's CUNY budget money.

25 I rely on my scholarships to be

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2 able to pay my rent. I rely on my scholarships to
3 be able to feed my children. I rely on my
4 education for my future. As a pre-med student, as
5 science classes are very expensive as they are
6 now. We have to pay \$650 per science class to be
7 able to get an education and that's four to six
8 hours of classes per day that I have to take. I
9 leave my house at 8:00 in the morning and I'm not
10 back until 11:00 at night, this is with me having
11 two children.

12 If it wasn't for our college and
13 our child development center that we have on our
14 campus, I would not be able to go to school. This
15 tuition increase, like our fellow panelists have
16 said, it's not only going to affect our college,
17 it's going to affect our community in general.
18 People are not understanding that the poor and
19 working class communities, all we have is CUNY.
20 We don't have anything else. For us to be able to
21 get to NYU and Columbia and Cornell, like our
22 students go to from Bronx Community, we have to go
23 through CUNY. Get an education and be able to
24 afford it.

25 I have seen students have stopped

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2 on the records because they own \$100 of tuition
3 and they can't continue classes. This is now;
4 imagine with a tuition increase. This country
5 that spends \$712 million in the criminal war in
6 Iraq daily, daily, \$10 million an hour is going to
7 tell our students that there is no money for
8 education. When they went and bailed out Wall
9 Street with \$1 trillion almost. Now they're
10 telling our students that it's going to be on our
11 backs to pay this back. This is really unfair.

12 Mayor Bloomberg and Governor
13 Patterson, I don't think they're realizing what
14 they're doing to New York City. CUNY graduates
15 are 25% of the New York City workforce. CUNY
16 graduates. NYU students leave, Columbia students
17 leave, CUNY students stay in New York. We are the
18 work force, we are the back bone. We are the main
19 core of concentration of workers in the city. For
20 us to have to work to pay for institution that we
21 founded to be free for our communities, this is
22 absurd. This is a further smack in the face to
23 us.

24 CUNY was founded free. Right now,
25 not only we can't afford with the Pell and TAP

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2 that they give us is not enough. On top of that,
3 they want to reduce our TAP and increase our
4 tuition. What is this? Are we really telling our
5 future students, our future leaders of this city
6 and this country, no you're not going to have an
7 education, while third world countries give their
8 students free full education? I shouldn't be
9 trying to leave the country that I'm supposed to
10 believe in to go to medical school, to be able to
11 afford it. Why should I be thinking of going to
12 another country to be able to afford medical
13 school when I'm supposed to be in the greatest
14 country in the world, the capital of the world
15 that is New York City? This is unfair.

16 I really, really urge Mayor
17 Bloomberg and Patterson not to do this because we
18 will fight. We're organized, we are well educated
19 and we are determined. We will not let this
20 happen to us. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you very
22 much.

23 [Applause]

24 That's right. Most deserving. We
25 truly applaud all of you and this is what our

1
2 struggle is all about. You represent what really
3 gets me up in the morning to really want to fight
4 for the things that I fight for. Because to see
5 how this is impacting you and the way you
6 presented it, I don't think any one of us could
7 put it clearer or more passionate than one you
8 did. I commend you highly for what you say four
9 children? Five children and a 3.5 index; I
10 definitely commend you for that.

11 [Applause]

12 But you'll keep on keeping on. We
13 are going to definitely win no matter how long it
14 takes and no matter how long we have to fight.
15 We're going to win because we're right and it's
16 the right thing to do. Thank you for your
17 testimony. If any of my colleagues have any
18 questions. Yes.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Thank
20 you. First of all I want to thank you Mr. Chair.
21 I think it's very important that we sometimes hear
22 first from the ones that are going to be impacted
23 directly for many of the decisions made by CUNY,
24 the state or the city.

25 I am a former graduate of a member

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2 of the CUNY student family and also came out of
3 the student leadership movement like many of you
4 here. I'll be critical of what I see in CUNY,
5 particularly with the student leadership at the
6 university. I think this is a wake up call. A
7 little late but this is a wake up call for
8 students to wake up and play more of an active
9 role. Not only when you are threatened with
10 tuition hikes but also with many of the decisions
11 that are made at the local campuses. My
12 understanding is that many of our students are not
13 participating. I'm hopeful that with this, I
14 wouldn't say wake up call. I think we're a little
15 late but with this situation that we're facing,
16 that there be more of a an organizing effort by
17 students to stand up, go to Albany, protest in
18 Albany, lobby Albany. Let Governor Patterson, who
19 is a Governor of the City of New York, of Harlem,
20 who understands the impact and he should be
21 reminded of the impact that this will have to the
22 local students, particularly the students that
23 make up CUNY, that are individuals like you and me
24 and himself and his kids.

25 I think that now we have an

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2 opportunity to organize. I know that I'm
3 available to be called on to help organize, help
4 develop the network and maybe go back and bring in
5 some of the old student leaders who in the early
6 90s and late 80s really took up and stood up
7 against tuition hikes. Back then we had a
8 Governor, what was his name? Cuomo was it?

9 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: That was
11 a real movement and I think that needs to happen
12 again. That needs to happen soon that every
13 campus in CUNY, both senior colleges and community
14 colleges are linked up, that there is a network to
15 go up to Albany. I will help subsidize some buses
16 to go to Albany and lobby. We need to start
17 moving and we need to start doing it quick.

18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you,
19 Chair. Thank you very much. Well said and much
20 appreciated. Yes.

21 MS. VILLAR: I'm so glad to hear
22 that because Councilman Martinez we are
23 organizing. We have a demonstration schedule for
24 December 8th at 4:00 pm at 80th and Lexington on
25 the corner of 24th Street. It is a citywide

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2 demonstration, organized by Bronx Community
3 College. It's a SUNY and CUNY. We are going to
4 close down Manhattan if this tuition increase
5 happens. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you very
much. We want to thank all of you for your
testimony. I think Tony Avella, you went to CUNY
right? CUNY graduate. I have a double degree, do
you have two or one?

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Av: I have one.

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CHAIRPERSON BARRON: All right.
Sorry. No, I was just trying to find out. Is
Gale Brewer? I don't think she went to CUNY. She
taught in CUNY and Larry Seabrooks, graduate from
CUNY. So you have a lot of us. Just think, I am
a product, all of those things I said it's on
behalf of the administration. All of my
controversial things, I got that from CUNY. So
all of those things that they beat me up for I
learned that from CUNY. So if I say anything else
about the Mayor, about the Governor, I got it from
CUNY. I check with John Kataliski before I say
anything and he gives me the okay. So all of the
things that I've said I got from John. Thank you

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very much. We thank you for your testimony.

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CLERK: Now we'll hear from the CUNY administration, Vice Chancellor Allen Dobrin, Vice Chancellor Iris Weinshall and Vice Chancellor Ernesto Malave.

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ALLAN DOBRIN: I just want to say before I begin, for the students who hopefully are still here, that not only is everyone from that side of the table CUNY graduates, everybody from this side of the table is CUNY graduates. Queens College at night, Brooklyn College and Bronx Community College. So having gone to school at night at Queens College and worked two jobs during the day, I'm very sympathetic. Given tuition was free when I was there and I didn't have five kids, I really in awe of our students that they're able to do this. We really appreciate how hard this is.

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CHAIRPERSON BARRON: But do you have a double degree?

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MR. DOBRIN: I have one for sure. [Pause]...in the doctorate program. [Pause] With that said, good afternoon Chairman Barron--sorry.

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CLERK: Do you swear or affirm that

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2 the testimony you are about to give is, to the
3 best of your knowledge, truthful and accurate?

4 MR. DOBRIN: I do.

5 CLERK: Thank you.

6 MR. DOBRIN: Let's try again. Good
7 afternoon Chairman Barron and members of the
8 Higher Education Committee. I am Allan Dobrin,
9 Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating
10 Officer of the City University of New York. With
11 me today are Vice Chancellor of Budget and
12 Finance, Mr. Malave and Vice Chancellor for
13 Facilities, Planning and Construction and
14 Management, Iris Weinshall.

15 Thank you for the opportunity to
16 speak with you about the city's proposed November
17 financial plan and its effects on CUNY, especially
18 our six community colleges, Borough of Manhattan,
19 Bronx, Hostos, Kings Borough, LaGuardia and
20 Queensborough.

21 But first I'd like to take a moment
22 to thank this committee. Council Member Gerson
23 and the entire City Council for your partnership
24 in requiring the funding for Fidderman Hall and
25 particularly you, Chairperson Barron, for your

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2 leadership on this important project. It would
3 not have happened without your enduring support.
4 All of us at CUNY are deeply grateful for it.

5 As a side item to my testimony,
6 when this year started, there were two things I
7 really, really worried about out of 100. One was
8 our financial condition and the other was
9 Fidderman Hall and we really thank you for
10 championing that for us. Now I only have one big
11 thing to worry about. Thank you.

12 Back to Council's long time support
13 for our community colleges is undoubtedly the
14 reason that just last week we saw an article in
15 the New York Times, which is appended, regarding
16 the impressive enrollment growth at the six
17 colleges. With a 6% enrollment jump since last
18 year alone, they now serve almost 82,000 students.
19 Community Colleges have also seen a significant
20 spike in applications this fall.

21 As the Times article said, in
22 September and October, one-third of the
23 application period for the spring semester the
24 number of applicants who made a CUNY college their
25 first choice was already 15% greater than all of

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2 last year. We have been carefully tracking this
3 growth and find it notable that some of the
4 largest enrollment increases across our community
5 colleges are in areas such as nursing and other
6 health services, business operations, fine arts
7 and engineering technologies. Areas deemed by the
8 New York State Department of Labor to have a very
9 favorable occupational outlook.

10 Clearly as New York grapples with
11 the effects of an economic downturn from layoffs
12 to the need of a second income, they're turning to
13 CUNY's community colleges for targeted career
14 preparation and job training. Our community
15 colleges are the city's best engine of work force
16 development. Almost 90% of our graduates are
17 employed within six months of earning an associate
18 degree. And over 94% are either employed or
19 enrolled for additional education.

20 CUNY students also stay in New York
21 City. Of those who are employed, 93% work in New
22 York City contributing to the city's economy. The
23 university's highest priority for community
24 college students is to achieve a degree that will
25 offer them better financial security. Which is

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2 why I have been so pleased to partner with the
3 city on accelerated study and associate programs,
4 better known to you as ASAP.

5 The program focuses on intensive
6 study, academic support, special scheduling blocks
7 and job development in order to help students
8 graduate in a timely way with an associate degree
9 and viable job opportunities. Our inaugural class
10 of almost 1,000 students has completed its first
11 year and is well on its way to meeting that goal.
12 We're very pleased to report that they have a
13 higher retention rate, better GPAs and have earned
14 more credits than a comparison group.

15 Our community colleges are
16 committed to helping every student succeed in
17 earning an associate's degree. Today, however,
18 they face serious budgetary challenges. The
19 fiscal year 2009 adopted budget provided \$239.5
20 million in city support for the community
21 colleges. Although there was no funding provided
22 for the programmatic initiatives outlined in the
23 university's budget, mandatory cost increases such
24 as collective bargaining, fringe benefits, energy
25 and a new lease space for BMCC were fully funded.

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2 However, the FY2009 budget proposal
3 included \$25.7 million in cuts to the community
4 colleges. Fortunately, the City Council was able
5 to restore \$19.8 million. While we are extremely
6 grateful for the Council's continued advocacy of
7 the university, the resulting shortfall of \$5.9
8 million along with the unanticipated payments to
9 the water board of \$1.8 million, left our
10 community colleges with a collective \$7.7 million
11 reduction in their operating budgets.

12 In addition, the FY2009 adopted
13 budget reduced city support for critical financial
14 aid programs. Specifically, \$4.4 million from the
15 Peter F. Vallone Scholarship program, \$500,000
16 from the Safety Nets Scholarship program, which I
17 know you are a big part of getting us. The
18 adopted budget also eliminated the city funding
19 for the CUNY Citizenship and Immigration Project,
20 \$600,000, the Immigration Center of Medgar Evers,
21 \$345,000 and the Joseph S. Murphy Institute for
22 Worker Education and Labor Studies \$250,000.

23 This past fall the city announced
24 that all agencies will be subject to a 2.5%
25 reduction in current year which equated to \$5.1

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2 million for CUNY. In order to mitigate the
3 negative impact of these cuts and help preserve
4 constructional and core services at community
5 colleges, the university identified \$2.5 million
6 in reductions through all the city funded
7 university wide programs. This reduced the impact
8 of community colleges to \$2.6 million.

9 The colleges were instructed to
10 absorb these cuts while protecting the core
11 instructional mission of the university. Still
12 some distress will be felt on our campuses as
13 areas such as libraries, maintenance and
14 operations and tutoring services will be impacted
15 by the cuts in the current year.

16 While mid-year reductions are
17 always painful, of greater concern is the fiscal
18 year 2010 reduction target of \$9.5 million at
19 community colleges. Based on the reduction
20 proposal submitted by our colleges are part of the
21 city's peg initiative, cuts of this magnitude
22 would have a harmful and direct impact on our
23 students.

24 For example at BMCC, as enrollment
25 is growing, the college would eliminate 20 part

1
2 time adjunct positions and significantly reduce
3 OTBS expenses in the area of maintenance and
4 operations. At Bronx Community College, as
5 enrollment is growing reductions in peer advisors
6 who assist in the effect of timely delivery of
7 student financial aid would negatively impact the
8 student experience. As Hostos Community College,
9 as enrollment is growing instructional staff
10 positions will be cut resulting in the loss of 38
11 sections per semester and evening and weekend
12 services provided by the library would be
13 eliminated.

14 And at Kingsborough Community
15 College, as enrollment is growing, tutorial
16 services will be reduced and facility maintenance
17 expenditures will be scaled back, curtailing space
18 utilization efforts to accommodate growing
19 enrollment. At LaGuardia Community College,
20 enrollment is growing, a reduction of 20 FTE
21 adjunct positions will result in the loss of 180
22 course offerings and 5,040 class seats. In
23 addition, the expansion of the college's nursing
24 programs as well as the new radiological program
25 would be deferred.

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2 And last but no less important, at
3 Queensborough Community College as enrollment is
4 growing, a reduction of temp service in the areas
5 of financial aid, health services, admissions, the
6 registrar's office and testing can negatively
7 impact students' academic progress.

8 On the capital side, September
9 capital plan updated incorporated a slow down in
10 capital projects that have been requested over the
11 summer. That slowdown has taken the form of a 20%
12 push of city funding projects in each of the
13 fiscal years 2009 through 2012 into a new fiscal
14 year 2013. CUNY was required to push \$77 million
15 of city capital funding for the fiscal years 2009
16 through 2012 into fiscal 2013.

17 In order to mitigate the impact of
18 this push, the university's first priority was the
19 protection of health and safety, facility
20 preservation funds. We then ensured that
21 additional funding for both new and reconstruction
22 projects currently under construction as well as
23 those projects with eminent start dates were
24 secured in fiscal year 2009 - 2010. Next we
25 attempted to protect active projects that have

1
2 received certificates to proceed from OMB but have
3 not yet been registered.

4 The impact of this reduction has
5 been felt across nearly all of the community
6 colleges. It is particularly difficult for our
7 community colleges which require state matched
8 funding in order to complete capital projects.
9 Many projects now will be delayed. An equal
10 amount of state funding will not be able to be
11 assessed.

12 Just two of the projects delayed
13 are at our community colleges are the renovation
14 of the eighth floor in center three of one of the
15 Community College and the Natural Science
16 renovation at Hostos Community College.

17 Chairperson Barron and members of
18 this Committee, we have always appreciated your
19 support in ensuring that community college
20 students receive the best education possible and
21 are prepared to strengthen a work force very much
22 in need of educated, motivated professionals.
23 This Committee has taken the lead in positioning
24 the community colleges, the principal workforce
25 engine of this city.

1
2 In these difficult times we again
3 look to you as our champion and also champion of
4 the needs of our communities. We are very
5 grateful for the Council's continuing partnership
6 and we look forward to working with you to meet
7 our financial challenges and to remain the
8 resource through which the city turns during
9 unsettling times. Thank you for your attention.

10 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you very
11 much. Anyone else? Well I want to thank you
12 certainly for the information and for your
13 continued support. And on Fidderman Hall, CUNY
14 must be applauded as well to help us to really--it
15 was a team effort. Getting CUNY, we had to
16 sacrifice some of our capital projects. We
17 shouldn't have had to do that. I think there
18 was a surplus and we didn't have to do it. I
19 think the city--anyway, we got the money; let me
20 stop before they take it back.

21 But I think CUNY was very, very
22 instrumental in seeing to it that we did as much
23 as we could through CUNY to also participate with
24 the state and the city and the FEMA and insurance
25 money to get Fidderman Hall. So you deserve an

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applaud and appreciation as well.

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MR. DOBRIN: Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON BARRON: With this,

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just some information so we have it. I think

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CUNY's budget is \$2.4 billion or something like

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that. How much is it for community colleges and

8

how much for the senior colleges?

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ERNESTO MALAVE: It's about \$1.75

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billion for seniors and \$609 million for the

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community colleges.

12

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: 6-0-9?

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MR. MALAVE: 6-0-9.

14

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And if the

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Governor gets his way with these proposed tuition

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increases, he doesn't say you have to do it. He

17

says you can. Does CUNY foresee enacting the

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increases that the Governor is proposing?

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MR. MALAVE: The increased cuts?

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CHAIRPERSON BARRON: The increased

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tuition.

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MR. MALAVE: In the senior

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colleges?

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CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes.

25

MR. MALAVE: We're reviewing that

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2 now. The Board's going to meet next week. I
3 can't say.

4

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: You don't have
5 a sense.

6

MR. DOBRIN: I think these are
7 really difficult fiscal times. I think that no
8 budget really comes. I think it's more likely
9 than not that there will be some increase. I
10 don't know what level but there will be some
11 increase in tuition.

12

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And how do you
13 think that increase, whatever level it is, will
14 impact students?

15

MR. DOBRIN: First of all, let me
16 say, we do a little bit of good news in the sea of
17 bad news. It's not easy. One of the things at
18 least this Governor did that no other Governor has
19 done is part of the money will return back to the
20 university. He originally thought he would have a
21 meeting of the minds of the legislature this week
22 and talked about 10% coming back for investment
23 during the spring, 20% next year and that
24 increasing. So the first time, at least the money
25 over time would come back to improve the

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university. So that's a little bit of good news.

I think there's--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing]

Just on that, isn't like 70%, 80%, 90% of it going to go into the...

MR. DOBRIN: That's why I said there's a little bit of good news in the sea of bad news.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I want to put emphasis on a little bit. We appreciate a little bit but it is... As a matter of fact we should say tiny bit.

MR. DOBRIN: That would be fair. I can live with tiny bit.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Tiny bit.

MR. DOBRIN: Perfectly fair.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Because most of it is going to go into state costs.

MR. DOBRIN: I think for the poorest of students there will be other things that impact them such as the problems we're having in the economy. But because it's below the Tap limit it probably won't affect them directly. So if you're the poorest among us, whether it is

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2 \$4,000 or \$4,600 the state of New York will pay
3 for your tuition.

4 I think for the minority of us such
5 as my friend to my right who has two children in
6 CUNY and I have a child at SUNY, who make
7 reasonable incomes. It's not a pleasant thing but
8 we will get through that. Then there's the whole
9 group in the middle. I worry about documented
10 students, foreign students, part time students,
11 the working poor. This will affect them and we
12 will find a way to use some of this money to try
13 to make sure we protect them. The Chancellor will
14 make the commitment if we have to do this. We
15 have made in the past that nobody should lose
16 their education based on this and we'll use
17 private funds and other things to support students
18 in harm's way.

19 But it's not a good thing. I
20 wouldn't begin to say having a tuition increases
21 is a good thing. But we also tried to protect the
22 gains that all of us have made over the last ten
23 years in this university collectively and turned
24 it around. So that's the balance that we're
25 trying to achieve.

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2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: How much is
3 OMB cooperating with you in terms of the ways you
4 want to cut? Are they accepting cuts or are they
5 accepting cuts? How's that going?

6 MR. MALAVE: It's fine. We had
7 originally submitted a proposal that included
8 planned reductions against some of the things that
9 are in the CUNY budget, like in the case of a
10 program at John Jay that we submitted as an
11 alternative to cutting the community colleges.
12 And they indicated that the poverty commission
13 associated with some of those programs had their
14 own targets and we couldn't count that against.
15 So we had to go back into the CUNY budget but for
16 the most part they've accepted 95% of the
17 recommendations.

18 I should just add, as Executive
19 Vice Chancellor indicated, we had a target of \$5.5
20 million as a peg reduction. But in anticipation
21 that there was going to be some kind of mid-year
22 reduction we set aside some reserves in the
23 beginning of the year so that the effect of peg to
24 the community colleges in the current year was
25 only \$2.5 million. Not only \$2.5 million but it

1
2 was an amount that could have been absorbed
3 without a major effect on the core business.
4 That's why our concern is primarily the \$9.5
5 million that is on the table for fiscal 2010.

6 The system has absorbed the \$2.5
7 million to date with minimal disruption. It's the
8 \$9.5 million that we have some difficulty with.

9 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: On the capital
10 side, you know they never say they're cutting
11 capital money. They're always pushing it.
12 Sometimes you can push it into the year 2020 so
13 push, push, push. How devastating has it been for
14 the capital side? I think we had some successes
15 in the capital area. Is there a lot of taking
16 away from that success or how do you see us
17 surviving that?

18 IRIS WEINSHALL: Not really. The
19 Executive Vice Chancellor noted in his testimony,
20 when we looked at the cuts we said health and
21 safety is number one. If a project is a health
22 and safety project, we're not going to cut it,
23 we're not going to push it out. We then looked at
24 projects in construction like the work that's
25 going on up at the Bronx Community College as well

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2 as at Queensborough Community College. Then
3 lastly we looked at projects that are going to
4 start eminently. We didn't want to have to build
5 up the hopes of those campuses just to pull it
6 back and, as you said, push it out way out into
7 the future.

8 That left us with \$72 million worth
9 of cuts that we had to take on projects that
10 didn't fall into any of these categories. I'm not
11 going to mislead you Mr. Chairman, the majority of
12 the cuts fell on the community colleges because
13 they need that 50/50 split between the city and
14 the state. So we're going to be closely
15 monitoring this and figuring out where we can
16 substitute Council money, Reso A money for this
17 money that's been cut and to try and get these
18 projects started.

19 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you very
20 much Miguel. Do you have any?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Thank you
22 Mr. Chair. You know what's the difference between
23 CUNY and the public school system and the Board of
24 Ed when we fight for the Board of Ed? We usually
25 say no cuts to instructional services. And for

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2 CUNY, all we get is cut to instructional services.
3 Every single one of the cuts highlighted in the
4 community colleges, 20 part time positions will be
5 lost at BMCC. Student aides advisers for
6 financial aid will be lost at Bronx Community
7 College. Hostos Community College will lose 38
8 sections of instruction per semester. That's a
9 result of instructional staff being reduced. And
10 library services will be eliminated. At
11 Kingsborough Community College, tutorial services
12 will be lost. At LaGuardia, 20 adjunct positions
13 will be lost. And at Queensborough, again, temp
14 services in the area of financial aid will be
15 lost.

16 So every single cut highlighted by
17 CUNY is always directed to impact student
18 services. We do not hear from CUNY what are they
19 doing to take that extra step in administrative
20 services. What are they doing in some other soft
21 course unto avoid direct impact to students? Why
22 aren't college presidents taking the train? Why
23 aren't we hearing about other alternative cuts
24 other than direct student services, particularly
25 classroom instruction.

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2 If enrollments are up and you
3 highlight that in your testimony and you also
4 bring in an article of how people want to go to
5 CUNY, why isn't CUNY going the extra step to
6 present us with alternative cuts other than direct
7 student services in addition to having students
8 pay more, which is a threat by the state. Where
9 is CUNY lending a helping hand?

10 MR. MALAVE: Thank you--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ:

12 [interposing] Second, Mr. Chair, when in the
13 briefing document that we got from Finance staff
14 it says that the program to eliminate gap. That
15 the agency has chosen, and you correct me if I'm
16 wrong. In the program to eliminate gap CUNY has
17 taken it upon themselves, correct me if I'm wrong,
18 to use our money, Council money towards
19 eliminating that gap with the \$250,000 to the City
20 Council Initiative Jobs to Build On and \$100,000
21 to the John Jay Certificate Program. Which are
22 Council money, am I reading that right?

23 MR. DOBRIN: I'll answer the second
24 and then I'll do a longer answer for the first
25 question you asked. I'm glad you asked.

1
2 MR. MALAVE: Yes, you're reading it
3 correctly. We sought to in part, minimize the
4 disruption at the community colleges and direct it
5 to colleges in the current year to protect the
6 core instructional programs. That in part, in
7 order to achieve that, in order to minimize the
8 cut instead of \$5 million to the community
9 colleges to \$2.5 million, we took some cuts
10 against all the items that were in the CUNY
11 budget. So if it was in the CUNY budget we cut to
12 protect as much as we could, the integrity of
13 those programs and at the same time preserve the
14 instructional and student programs at the
15 community colleges. So the answer is yes.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: So you
17 went an extra step to look at in the budget where
18 you could cut in addition to student services.
19 And the other area you found to cut were programs
20 that the Council funded?

21 MR. MALAVE: No, not in addition to
22 student services. In lieu of student services, we
23 directed the campuses not to cut instructional
24 programs and student services. We directed them
25 to apply the reductions against the administrative

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2 budgets of the campuses. They did, they have and
3 in part to do that, to achieve that goal we took
4 what we thought was an amount from other programs
5 that would protect the integrity of those programs
6 and at the same time preserve the ability of
7 campuses to preserve those instructional and
8 student support services. That's what we did.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: But,
10 again, these are Council funded programs, Council
11 initiatives, right? That the Council put at CUNY
12 for the Jobs to Build on initiative, the John Jay
13 certificate program and so forth. And in your
14 overall analysis of the program to eliminate gap,
15 you're doing the same thing, Mr. Chair, that we're
16 fighting. I want to highlight this because every
17 agency is doing this also.

18 The Mayor goes out and he sends out
19 his budget reduction requests to all the agencies.
20 They look at what the Council is funding to cut.
21 I feel that when we talk about jobs, when we talk
22 about making students and creating a workforce in
23 the City of New York, I don't think it's right for
24 CUNY to go and take from our monies, the Council
25 monies to meet their mandate of the Mayor to close

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2 the gap, which is in essence what's happening.

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They're taking our money that we put in the Council as part of their program to close the gap, to eliminate the gap. And sending it back to the Mayor; we've done our work. But in essence they're taking our money. That's wrong. CUNY should look deeper into their fundings, administrative services and other areas that are not student services, that are not classroom instruction services and present that as their program to eliminate gap and not taking our money to eliminate their gap.

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I heard what you said but that's in essence what's happening there because every agency is doing it. And CUNY is doing the same. The first one, do you remember?

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MR. DOBRIN: I remember all of it actually because I'm actually glad you asked the question. You want to ask that question because it gives me a chance to show off a little bit, which I wouldn't have normally done. First of all, we've already had \$80 million worth of cuts this year, mostly state cuts but \$80 million. The Chancellor gave out very clear instruction, not a

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2 penny of it comes out of the classroom. We
3 replace every full time faculty member that leaves
4 and we replace everybody who does direct student
5 services. Every penny of the \$80 million has got
6 to come from somewhere else, that's number one.

7 Number two, where I get to show off
8 a little bit is one of the reasons I got hired
9 here is because I do productivity. So when the
10 Chancellor looked at what the next few years were
11 going to look like, he knew that it is unlikely
12 we're going to be receiving massive amounts of
13 money. So he asked me to take a look at the
14 administrative program and see ways to try to save
15 money administratively and then transfer that to
16 the academic side of the house.

17 Things from, when I came at first I
18 put together an IT steering committee. And I said
19 what kind of PCs does everybody use? It turns out
20 everybody except three campuses were using Dell.
21 I said what are you paying in prices? They're all
22 paying different prices. So I ask our CIO, go to
23 Dell, take the lowest price anyone pays and ask
24 them to subtract 25% off the cost. They said no,
25 we said fine, we'll go to Gateway. They said

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2 we're just kidding. So now we save 25% off every
3 computer we get off the best price we used to get.

4 We were able to do things like this
5 and take \$50 million over five years and transfer
6 it to the other side. There were so many
7 interesting things with the campuses. The College
8 of Staten Island at one point, they put in a
9 productivity initiative that they used to have a
10 goose problem and spent money on chemicals for the
11 geese. They then bought a dog from the pound and
12 they had him chase the geese and then took the
13 productivity savings, the difference from what
14 they used to spend and what they spend now. We
15 have hundreds of things we've done like this.

16 We've done more of this than any
17 agency. I have spent 30 years in city government.
18 Nobody has ever done as much as this as we have
19 and everything we do does not affect the
20 classroom. The reason we put in our testimony the
21 things that are classroom oriented because we
22 thought that's what you wanted to hear. You
23 didn't want to hear we'll use three pounds less
24 solvent to clean the buildings. We're doing lots
25 of things, almost all of the things on the

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2 administrative side of the house. I appreciate
3 you asking the question because I didn't want to
4 leave-

5 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing]
6 If I may, just for a minute. Just to interject, I
7 think your line of questioning is excellent. You
8 can correct me if I'm wrong, it's not so much
9 saying that this is actually what's going to
10 happen. But when you have a hearing the last
11 thing we want the administration to know and the
12 state to think is that everything is fine, that we
13 will take care of everything through
14 administrative cuts and that there will be no
15 impact on the class or on students. Then they
16 won't think that we have an emergency and a dire
17 situation and have them not do the cuts, that's
18 one thing.

19 The other thing that's challenging,
20 let's take the safety net program. \$500,000 was
21 taken off that, I think we have \$4 million or
22 something like that. That is for tuition
23 assistance. And it also gives you flexibility to
24 say if we can assist students in a maximized way
25 and at the same time transfer some of that to help

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2 in other areas so it doesn't reach the classroom
3 and it doesn't reach faculty and layoffs, that
4 gives us that flexibility.

5

6 The purpose of the whole hearing is
7 to say to the state, say to the city that these
8 cuts will be devastating to the classroom,
9 devastating to the faculty, devastating to student
10 services, devastating to libraries so that they
11 don't do it and look for other means. So that's
12 part of the presentation. We got to be as
13 creative and vigilant as possible to make sure
14 that state and the city realizes that this should
15 not be an option because this is what you may
16 force us to do.

16

17 I think you get my drift and I got
18 to put you in an uncomfortable situation. Saying
19 you're trying to send a message like when they
20 have students-

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21 MR. DOBRIN: [interposing] Pick
22 their side.

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23 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: No, no, it's
24 not picking sides. It's looking at the purpose of
25 this hearing.

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MR. DOBRIN: I'm just kidding.

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CHAIRPERSON BARRON: It's to not say to the state that they can manage everything fine and the classroom will not be hurt. We want to let the city know that instruction will be hurt, faculty will be hurt, students will be hurt. That every piece of CUNY and their services provided to the students, libraries, instruction, all of that we have no more fat. You're cutting our meat now and that's our students. So I think that's what we're trying to get the message to the city and to the state in this hearing. Say there is no more fat, that if you do this that you can actually devastate classrooms.

Then if we need to sit down for when the final decisions are made on the budget and we need to sit down with CUNY to see how these things work out we can always reconvene and see how we hurt students the least. But as it stands now, that this will devastate the classroom, it will devastate instruction and we want the city and the state to know that.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: I totally agreed that it will have an impact on student services and on instruction. However, I would

1
2 strongly advise that we build the strategy with
3 CUNY in looking at--If it becomes a reality, what
4 other alternatives do we have. I think we should
5 work towards that rather than wait for the storm
6 to come down. Even if it's not making it public
7 or whatever it is--

8 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing]

9 But you just made it public, thank you Miguel.
10 Thank you so much. You made our strategy public
11 but we will definitely do that. We will
12 definitely do that.

13 [Laughter]

14 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you
15 Miguel, we will definitely do that.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: There is--

17 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing]

18 I do hear what you're saying.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: There are
20 a lot of meetings, there's a lot of movements. I
21 know that the central labor council, the civil
22 servant employees DC 37, they're all putting heads
23 together and preparing and looking to what other
24 means we have to preserve services throughout the
25 city, with what's predicted that's coming down.

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2 And I think we should do the same with CUNY.

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However, I totally disagree again with CUNY. It's not just a CUNY issue. I disagree with agencies taking the mandate from the Mayor that you got to close the gap and then the first thing they look at to close the gap are programs and money that the Council funded that they include in their program to close gaps, that I totally disagree with.

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CHAIRPERSON BARRON: We're on the same page with that. All of us understand that and we will fight that. Just once again understand that when these things hit, reality income comes from the private sector, a certain amount of income that's coming from the public sector. There's some income that's coming from the City Council, from student tuition and all of that. So when you get in a room and you say here's the final reality. We shot our best shots, I believe when we finish and we go through all of this that we will come up with something that you would be pleased with.

Certainly you and I have always fought but one of the things that I think is very,

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2 very important for this city to understand that
3 the Council money should not have to be used. And
4 I couldn't agree with you more, to deal with these
5 kinds of budget balancing acts. And that students
6 should not suffer, whether it's instruction,
7 libraries or what have you. That those things we
8 should say that we're going to fight to make sure
9 those things don't happen. And you guarantee
10 you're going to get the fight from this committee
11 and certainly from the students and we'll all be
12 on same page.

13

14 But I think the purpose of this
15 hearing is to let the city and the state know that
16 these cuts are no longer management efficiency
17 cuts, they're no longer administrative cuts, they
18 are reaching the classroom, they are reaching
19 faculty, they are reaching instruction and it can
20 not be tolerated and we will not let that happen.
I think that's where we want to get.

21

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COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Of

course.

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CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I think we're

on the same page.

25

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Capital,

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2 John Jay, would it impact in terms of delaying the
3 construction there?

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5 MS. WEINSHALL: Not in the larger
6 building that's going up, the new 600,000 square
7 foot building.

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9 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: The one
10 on the...

11

12 MS. WEINSHALL: That is still on
13 schedule, under construction and that is not
14 affected because that is funded through state
15 bonds.

16

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: I know
18 that last year we brought up a lot of issues in
19 terms of infrastructure and plumbing and so forth
20 at Bronx Community. Is that going to be on hold?

21

22 MS. WEINSHALL: This is sort of a
23 flip to what you said about the Council money.
24 Here we were able to use your money to leverage
25 state money and continue to do those projects. So
in that instance we used the Council money as part
of the 50/50 split between the city and the state
and those projects are moving ahead.

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27 As a matter of fact, we had a very
28 large problem out of Bronx Community College with

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2 the sink hole because o the utilities underneath.
3 I have to tell you, it was in emergency; we had to
4 do the work. And OMB was very forthcoming with eh
5 CP to let us proceed and to use city money to get
6 this done. So the answer is if you'll continue to
7 be generous, we'll be able to continue to be
8 creative in terms of using your money to leverage
9 state money and get projects done.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Thank
11 you. Mr. Chair, I'm sorry I let the cat out the
12 box.

13 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: You did a fine
14 job. I think your points were well taken and I
15 think you got our point too and we'll move forward
16 because what you said, in all due serious. It's
17 very, very serious and we got to be vigilant about
18 what you're saying to make sure that things that
19 you raised that we do. I think you raised
20 pertinent issues and we'll be fine.

21 Thank you very much for your
22 testimony.

23 MR. DOBRIN: Mr. Chairman I want to
24 thank you for your support and for your
25 sophistication.

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2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes. Thank
3 you very much.

4 MR. DOBRIN: Thank you.

5 CLERK: Steve London. Please raise
6 your right hands. Do you swear or affirm that the
7 testimony you're about to give is, to the best of
8 your knowledge, truthful and accurate?

9 STEVE LONDON: Yes. Thank you.
10 Thank you Chair Barron, Council Member Martinez.
11 As always, it's a pleasure to be here. I'm joined
12 with two staff members from the PSC. I know you
13 always are very understanding of the importance of
14 staff so I'd just like to introduce Nick Cruise,
15 an organizer and James Long. They're here with me
16 today.

17 I've passed out a fact sheet that
18 we've prepared. I will make my remarks very brief
19 and to the point. While I am here testifying by
20 myself today for the PSC, I also am here to
21 deliver a message with the tip of the iceberg of
22 over 40,000 and counting cards from the students.

23 [Applause]

24 MR. LONDON: These are my CUNY
25 rising cards and the message is very clear. It

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2 says a quality education is the best investment,
3 especially in hard times. CUNY provides hope and
4 real opportunity, don't take that away. On the
5 back it says, invest in CUNY with public dollars
6 not tuition hikes. Currently we've got over
7 40,000 of these signed. At the rate we're going
8 we anticipate we'll be somewhere between 60,000
9 and 70,000 by December 16th when we're going to
10 deliver these to Governor Patterson's office. We
11 think it's real important of the Governor and for
12 the Mayor and for the Chancellor to hear directly
13 from CUNY students.

14 I know we have some very eloquent
15 spokespeople here representing the students. So
16 we're affording the opportunity for the tens and
17 tens of thousands of students to make their voices
18 heard. So whatever I have to say today is going
19 to be amplified.

20 I want to thank you for this
21 opportunity and we always appreciate the support
22 that the Committee and Chair Barron, that you have
23 always offered the students, the faculty and the
24 professional staff in City University of New York.
25 I think it's very clear. It's almost, at this

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2 point, I think foregoing conclusion that
3 investment in public higher education is a key to
4 re-invigorating our economy. This is the time for
5 investment in CUNY because a New Deal for New York
6 starts with CUNY.

7 We've heard what the spending cuts
8 that we've already suffered this year. We know
9 that the cuts have been, you've heard, \$80 million
10 from the Chancellor's representatives. And those
11 cuts have hurt. There's no doubt about it. We
12 see increasing class sizes. We see already
13 adjuncts being notified that they may not get
14 their classes next semester. We saw, in the
15 Chancellor's testimony what the impact would be if
16 cuts area carried out. So this has real impact.

17 I also have to mention that the
18 productivity increases that the Executive Vice
19 Chancellor spoke about, I understand that there's
20 always efficiencies and we're all for
21 efficiencies. But a lot of those efficiencies
22 mean our members work harder and it means that you
23 don't have quite as many people servicing students
24 in line for registration. The lines are longer so
25 those are not no cost items so we always have to

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2 be mindful of that.

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4 When you invest in CUNY, we know
5 that the return is great. \$15 billion is returned
6 every year from CUNY graduates and we also know
7 that 80% of CUNY graduates stay in state. So
8 cutting CUNY is the wrong approach in this period,
9 in any period but in particularly in periods of
10 economic crisis. We have Nobel laureates who make
11 this point and Paul Krugman make this point. So
12 there is ample academic research that supports
13 this perspective.

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There is another way to make
investment other than tuition increase and that is
by increasing the rest of income tax, the so
called billionaire's tax. There is also even at
the state level a rainy day fund that can be
tapped for the immediate budget shortfalls. We
know that there are other proposals for raising
revenue that will impact those who are wealthy and
can afford it. Certainly during a period such as
this, you don't want to take money out of the
economy. You want to put money into the economy
and not take money out of people's pockets who
have to spend everything they have on goods and

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2 services. Wealthy people have money that is
3 laying around in banks and that they can put into
4 revenue for the state.

5 I think it's instructive to know
6 that today the richest 1% of New York families,
7 those earning above \$1.6 million pay only 6.5% of
8 their income in state and local taxes. Those with
9 mid-level incomes, between \$27,000 and \$40,000 pay
10 11.6%. The poorest New Yorkers with incomes under
11 \$15,000 pay 12.6%. This is a regressive taxation
12 system raising tuition but it will only make it
13 more regressive.

14 Also this is premature given the
15 fact that the federal government and President
16 Elect Obama has called for an economic stimulus
17 plan and aid to localities. We need to see where
18 that goes before we talk about any other cuts,
19 certainly to services and particularly to CUNY.

20 I think the level of dis-investment
21 over the last period, the last 15 or 20 years has
22 been very severe. What we have see is that during
23 the 190s we had four tuition increases and during
24 that same period CUNY came at the end of that
25 period in inflation adjusted dollars with \$245

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2 million less in total dollars to spend. So it's
3 not as though tuition increases is an efficient or
4 good way to raise revenue. In fact, we've seen
5 that history shows that it's a way of showing that
6 there's a lack of support for CUNY and we need to
7 gain public support.

8 I want to thank you for this
9 opportunity to make our views known here and I'd
10 be happy to answer any questions you have.

11 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Well thank you
12 very much for your testimony. We certainly
13 appreciate your support over the years, the
14 faculty has always been very supportive. I wanted
15 to ask you a question about they say when the
16 economy is bad we have to do these things. These
17 are economic crises times. But I heard President
18 Bowen at a press conference earlier state that in
19 the 1930s when there was a Great Depression that
20 they actually built three new CUNY schools during
21 the Great Depression and tuition was free. Built
22 three schools, had remediation and this was during
23 the Great Depression. Maybe you can elaborate a
24 little better on that.

25 MR. LONDON: Certainly, Brooklyn

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2 College, Lehman College and Queens College were
3 built during the Great Depression. The works
4 progress administration was very important in that
5 project, which included not just federal funds but
6 also state funds. It was clearly a period when we
7 saw nationally there was 25% unemployment, bread
8 lines, people on the streets. It was very
9 difficult economically; we all understand that.
10 But that generation had the foresight to invest in
11 CUNY. So we saw an entire generation, many
12 generations now since then, several generations
13 that have been educated and contribute to the
14 economic well being of this city and of the state.

15 It seems to us to be very clear
16 that history teaches us these lessons. If you go
17 back to the 1970s and you see when the city was in
18 crisis, there was an opposite plan put into place;
19 lay offs, cut backs. You heard, again, testimony
20 about what happened in terms of taking money out
21 of capital and you see deteriorating plans and put
22 in tuition. While CUNY has survived, it's never
23 fully recovered from that period.

24 Right before the fiscal crisis
25 period we had over 11,000 full time faculty. By

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2 the mid-90s it was down to 5,300. We see that
3 we've put in this two tiered, highly exploitive
4 labor system with thousands of adjuncts who are
5 teaching now. They do a great job but it's hard
6 to serve students if you're working part time
7 working many jobs. So we've seen money pulled out
8 and that has not helped the city.

9 I think if you look at those two
10 models, one invest and build and you reap the
11 benefits. The other is take away funds and you
12 wind up with decay and demoralization.

13 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you for
14 that. If you have any written information, you
15 can forward to my office I would appreciate it,
16 that looks at what happened during those two
17 periods in 1930s and 1970s and what were some of
18 the approaches and the differences; kind of a
19 comparison of the approaches.

20 And also, what was the ethnic
21 comparison. In the 1930s CUNY was white, in the
22 more color CUNY got, the more the policies changed
23 in correspondence to the race of the students and
24 the class of the students. So if you can get me
25 some information on that I would greatly

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2 appreciate it.

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4 Whenever we talk about an economic
5 crisis, it's not that the city is broke. It's not
6 that the state is broke. It's not that Wall
7 Street is broke. Wall Street, they just didn't
8 make the amount of profits that they wanted to
9 make. They didn't make the billions, they made a
10 little less billions but they were still in the
11 black. And then certainly in the city we have a
12 \$60 billion budget that has to be spent. Whether
13 you have a \$5 billion deficit or \$5 billion
14 surplus, \$60 billion is going to be spent. And
15 it's about the prioritization of spending and it's
16 about a more progressive way of balancing budgets
17 and raising revenue as opposed to cutting those
18 who we can't afford to bleed any more than we're
19 already bleeding.

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I'll end it with that and I thank
you very much for your testimony. With that, this
hearing is adjourned.

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MR. LONDON: Thank you.

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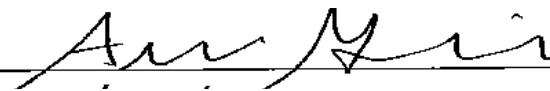
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Amber Gibson", written over a horizontal line.

Date December 11, 2008