



December 2, 2013

Council Member Robert Jackson
Education Committee Chair
New York City Council
751 W 183rd Street
New York, NY 10033

Dear Council Member Jackson,

My name is Lisa Castillo Richmond and I am the Director of Graduate NYC!, a citywide initiative that aims to double the number of New Yorkers graduating from high school college ready and those that complete college degrees by the year 2020. We aim to accomplish this by working in close partnership with the NYC Department of Education and the City University of New York. Graduate NYC! is also the lead organization that developed and operates [NYC College Line](#). Launched earlier this year, NYC College Line aspires to become the city's go-to resource for accurate, reliable information on exploring, applying to, and succeeding in college for NYC students, parents, and counselors. The site features many useful tools and valuable information, including resources related to college affordability and comparing financial aid packages.

I am writing to add Graduate NYC's support to the NYCDOE recommendation that NYC College Line be considered the venue for distributing information on college costs, college savings vehicles, and tuition and related costs (sticker price vs. actual cost to student), easily accessible for high school and college students, parents and college/guidance counselors online. Additionally, we believe that another city agency, such as the Office of Financial Empowerment, would be well positioned to provide further information or instruction on financial literacy topics for students and families through their regular outreach efforts or through a targeted partnership with NYC College Line.

Should you have any further questions about NYC College Line, Graduate NYC!, or our support of the proposed bill, please do contact me. Thank you so much.

Best regards,
Lisa

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Castillo", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Lisa Castillo Richmond
Director, Graduate NYC!

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NYC College Line

Students, families, and those who provide advisement services know that a college degree matters, and are turning to the internet for resources to inform their process to degree. The internet is rich in resources about college – who should go, where to go, and how to go. These resources range from information about test preparation, college application assistance, college enrollment, and financial aid, among many, many others. Students, parents, and even professionals struggle to navigate this wealth of uneven information, and often come up short when looking for resources related to college retention and success. To meet this challenge head on Graduate NYC!, in conjunction with a range of government and community partners, launched NYC College Line this year, a new web-based portal to connect students, their families, and the professionals who support them, to information about preparing for, enrolling in, and ultimately succeeding in college.

To support **students, and their families**, NYC College Line enables users to connect to and filter a vast array of information and resources, so it is relevant to them. Features include:

- **A searchable database of NYC-based programs.** This “directory” enables students, families and professionals, for the first time in NYC, to differentiate and find college readiness, access, and completion programs and supports, by location, program type, among other characteristics essential to their decision-making process.
- **A personalized experience by user.** A “folder” tool that enables users to categorize, save, and share the most recent internet-based resources related to college preparation, access, transition, and college success.
- **Access to advisement services.** Trained student and advisor fellowship will be “on –call” to answer students questions about access to services, or for referrals to more in depth support for issues related to college readiness, access, and success via email within 24-48 hours.
- **Student and parent perspective.** Dynamic student and parent generated content like video diaries, blogs, social media, etc., to provide student and parent perspective on college going, and college completion.

What students and parents know, and use, as part of their college process is integral to how professionals deliver services. To that end, NYC College Line will also feature resources geared to those working in advisement and counseling. Modeled after the success of K-12 Open Educational Resources for curriculum sharing, etc., NYC College Line has a user-driven ‘Professional Learning Community’. Key features include:

- **Accurate, ‘open source’ materials on college readiness, access, enrollment, and success.**
 - In partnership with the Goddard Riverside Options Institute, NYC College Line provides free, accurate materials, such as advisement curriculum, training materials, student and family checklists, etc. for users. It will also be a place to “crowd source” additional partner’s high quality materials that can be used by other organizations.
 - Research and best practice library of national and local research on advisement.
 - Dynamic adviser-generated content like video diaries, blogs, and social media to enable advisers to share their perspectives on strategies and tools to support college completion.
- **A forum for web-based training.** NYC College Line provides a space for inexpensive professional development for community members run by reputable, high quality partners.
- **A personalized experience by user.** A “folder” tool that enables users to categorize, save, and share the most recent internet-based resources, and resources related to college preparation, access, transition, and college success.