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COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

September 27, 2018  
Start: 10:11 a.m.  
Recess: 1:13 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway-Committee Rm, 14<sup>th</sup> Fl.

B E F O R E: INEZ D. BARRON  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

LAURIE A. CUMBO  
ROBERT F. HOLDEN  
BEN KALLOS  
YDANIS A. RODRIGUEZ

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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

Vita Rabinowitz  
Interim Chancellor of the City University of New  
York

Jose Luis Cruz  
President of Lehman College of the City  
University of New York

Claudia Schrader  
President of Kingsborough Community College of  
The City University of New York

Dionne Bennett  
Assistant Professor in the African American  
Studies Department at City Tech

Arthur Lewin  
Professor in the Ethnic Studies Department at  
Baruch College

Assetou Kone  
President of City College of New York African  
Student Union, Student

Brenda Greene  
Chair of the English Department at Medgar Evers  
College, Executive Director of the Center for  
Black Literature at Medgar Evers College

Anthony Browne  
Chair of the Department of Africana and Puerto  
Rican/Latino Studies at Hunter College

Owen Brown  
Professor of Sociology at Medgar Evers College

James Blake  
Professor, President of Borough of Manhattan  
Community College, BMCC, Black Faculty and Staff

Jerome Brown  
Student at the Borough of Manhattan Community  
College, BMCC; Published Writer

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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

Valerie Small  
Professor at the Borough of Manhattan Community  
College, BMCC

Hercules Reid  
Legislative Director for the City University of  
New York University Student Senate, CUNY USS,  
Alumnus of New York City College of Technology,  
Co-Chair of the City Council's CUNY Task Force

John Aderounmu  
Chairperson of the University Student Senate at  
CUNY, Member of Board of Trustees at CUNY

Liam Giordano  
One of Two Elected Delegate Senators from Bernard  
M. Baruch College to the City University's  
Student Senate

Kasson Colon-Mangin  
Student at City College of New York

Ras Omeil Morgan  
Alumnus at CUNY Medgar Evers College

Naajidah Correll  
Student at City College

Hanan Hameen  
Founder of Artsucation Academy Network, MSEdL

Shawn Best  
Interim University Director for the CUNY Black  
Male Initiative, BMI

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Good morning and welcome to today's oversight hearing on African American studies and the hiring of black faculty at the city university of New York. I'm Council Member Inez Barron, Chair of the Committee on Higher Education and a proud CUNY alum. First, I want to acknowledge that it has been more than four years since the committee last conducted a hearing on faculty diversity at CUNY. During that hearing we recognized that while CUNYs undergraduate student body more or less reflect the diversity of New York City, it's faculty and leadership do not. This lack of diversity is even more profound at the top governance of the university including the Chancellor and college president levels. Unfortunately, since that hearing there has been a growing resentment of diversity in this country to the point where black Americans had to stand up and continue to do so to remind everyone that black lives matter and that resentment was even more proliferated, proliferated at our government federal level. We all remember when Donald Trump unapologetically claimed that both sides were blamed for the violence in white supremacy

rallies. But I want to remind you and indeed celebrate with you that New York is one of the most culturally diverse cities in the country and along with many of its great institutions such as CUNY, New York City is the greatest city in the world not in spite of its diversity but because of it. As such CUNY was established with explicit legislative findings that recognized an imperative need for affirmative action and that it's personnel should quote, "reflect the diverse communities which comprise the people of the city and state of New York". Moreover, the intent of these findings quote, "should be evident in all the guidelines established by the Board of Trustees" end quote including specifically hiring. According to the U.S. census there are more than a third of New York City population that was born outside of the United States. Nearly a quarter identify as black and nearly a third as Hispanic. Just under 15 percent is Asian Pacific Islander. This diversity continues to be reflected across CUNY's undergraduate institutions where over a quarter of its students are black, one third Hispanic and more than a fifth Asian Pacific Islanders but there exist troubling inequities as we

look deeper into the representation of black people across the university. Although there is an abundance of research touting the importance of culturally... of cultural diversity especially in an educational setting, one does not need to cite sources to realize that racial diversity benefits everyone. In post Brown versus Board of Education, United States, we know that diversity expands worldliness, enhances social development, prepares students for work in a global society as well as future career success, increases our knowledge base, promotes creative thinking, enhances self-awareness and enriches multiple perspectives. This is also true of the importance of African American studies in our schools. Black Americans deserve to have their role in civilization, history, literature, politics, and society honored and celebrated. There are currently more than 900,000 black undergraduates enrolled at public colleges and universities across the country. For every full-time black faculty member at a public college or university, there are 42 full time degree seeking black students. Again, that ratio, for every full-time black faculty member at a public college or university there are 42 full time degree seeking

black undergraduates. So, of the 1,691 institutions across the country, 40 of those institutions employ no full-time black instructors and on 44 percent of public campuses there are ten or fewer full-time black faculty members across all ranks and academic fields. In a report published by the University of Southern California on black students at public colleges and universities published this month, certain CUNY schools ranked favorably in four equity indicators with regard to black students and faculty while others failed miserably. It is therefor crucial that CUNY make a concerted effort with measurable outcomes to increase diversity among members of both the administration and faculty and increase and uplift black administrators and faculty in particular. There are few state and federal policy makers that identifies black, this in part attributes to a raceless approach in policy making that fails to level the playing field for black Americans. Of course, policy makers across all racial and ethnic groups as well as a largely white college presidents, trustees, senior administrators, professors, and admissions office across the U.S. are responsible for guaranteeing that public post-secondary institutions

equitably serve the public including black constituencies. As a black member, as a black member of the New York City Council and as Chair of the Committee on Higher Education I am committed to fighting for educational equities and ensuring that CUNY better serves black students. This does not happen in a vacuum, post-secondary institutions need not only improved representation equity in student enrollment but also gender and degree completion. It also requires a comprehensive approach to improving the black student to black faculty ratio which may include an obligation to address the racial climate and potential workload imbalance issues and ensure that non-black faculty and administrators respect their scholarship. I know that CUNY has a number of programs and initiatives to increase diversity among its student's population and in the recruitment of faculty and administrators and I'm looking forward to learning about their outcomes but that remain racial inequities from campus to campus among students, faculty and administrators and among university leadership. I want to acknowledge my colleagues on the Higher Education Committee who are present; we have Council Member Holden and we have Majority



1 Leader Laurie Cumbo. I would also like to thank my  
2 staff; Chloe Rivera, the Committee's Policy Analyst;  
3 Paul Sinegal, the Counsel to the Committee; Yariv  
4 Shavitt, the, the Committee's new Finance Analyst;  
5 Joyce Simmons, my Chief of Staff; my CUNY Liaison  
6 Indigo Washington, Director of Legislation. And now  
7 at this time I'm going to have the first panel called  
8 and then the counsel will administer the oath. We're  
9 going to have a panel consisting of Vita Rabinowitz,  
10 the Interim Chancellor; Jose Luis Cruz, President of  
11 Bronx... of Lehman College in the Bronx and Claudia  
12 Schrader, President of Brooklyn College... no,  
13 President Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn.  
14 You can have a seat and the counsel will administer  
15 the oath.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK: Good morning. Would you  
18 raise your right hands? Do you affirm to tell the  
19 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in  
20 your testimony before this committee and to respond  
21 honestly to Council Member's questions?

22 [panel affirms]

23 COMMITTEE CLERK: Please state your names  
24 for the record?

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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VITA RABINOWITZ: I am Vita Rabinowitz,  
Interim Chancellor.

CLAUDIA SCHRADER: Claudia Schrader,  
President of Kingsborough Community College.

JOSE LUIS CRUZ: Jose Luis Cruz,  
President of Lehman College.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you, we  
welcome you especially our new president just signed  
and we're so glad that you're here and we're ready  
for your testimony.

VITA RABINOWITZ: Thank you and good  
morning Chair Barron and good morning members of the  
Higher Education Committee of the City Council. My  
name is Vita Rabinowitz, I am Interim Chancellor of  
the City University of New York. I am delighted to  
join you today along with my esteemed colleagues,  
Jose Luis Cruz, President of Lehman College and  
Claudia Schrader, President of Kingsborough Community  
College as of 12 days ago. I appreciate the  
opportunity for us to testify before you and thank  
you as always for your steadfast support of CUNY, our  
students and faculty. I am here today to speak about  
faculty diversity generally with a particular focus  
on the hiring of black faculty. You have also asked

about the state of black or African American studies at CUNY and I will be addressing that as well. CUNY as you know, is a majority minority system and arguably the most diverse university in the United States, if not the world. We pride ourselves on reflecting the extraordinary diversity of the city we serve. We exemplify our commitment to access, diversity, inclusion and equity in so many places in our student enrollments, in our leadership, in the many programs the university and its colleges run to recruit and support diverse populations, in our scholarly work in the public interest, in our welcoming and accommodating campus climates and in the extensive services that CUNY offers to the New York... to New York City and the community. Our approach to the hiring, retention and advancement of faculty of color is a key example of this commitment and has been a particular focus of mine over the past three years in, in my position as University Provost. Hiring faculty of color is deeply rooted in our mission of academic excellence and opportunity for all. We simply cannot be the university we aspire to be without a diverse faculty and staff. The quality of the education we offer our students and our

contribution to academic knowledge depends on having a wide range of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives in our faculty and leadership. In addition, we know from research and deeply believe that the composition of our faculty matters to students' success. For our minority students, seeing people who look like them and share their backgrounds engages and inspires them. it reinforces our essential mission: CUNY was built for them; they are welcome here; they can thrive here. For all students, regardless of ethnicity, exposure to a diverse set of great thinkers and leaders prepares them to thrive and lead in an increasingly globalized world. For any of our students who want to be professors themselves, they have come to the right place if they come to CUNY. Let me start with some basic facts to ground today's discussion. In recent years, both the number and share of our total faculty who are members of federally protected minority groups comprised of American Indian, Native Alaskan, Asian, Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Black African American, Hispanic Latino or two or more races has been growing. Between fall 2010 and fall 2017 the share of full-time minority faculty encompassing all those groups has

grown from 32.3 percent to 35.9 percent and the total number has grown from 2,369 to 2,746. In the same period, full time black or African American faculty grew very slightly, from 933 to 944 and the share of the total percentage of black faculty is essentially flat at about 12.3 percent. It's important to note that there is wide variation in the share of faculty who are minority across CUNY campuses and across academic disciplines. In terms of executive positions on campus and in the central office, in the fall of 1970... excuse me, of 2017, 35 percent were underrepresented minorities with 17 percent black or African American. Again, there is a wide range across CUNY institutions. So, what have we been doing to address these issues? In order to advance diversity among faculty and staff, we have had to work on several fronts simultaneously. First, we have to bring in more diverse new hires. And second, we have to work to retain and advance the minority faculty and staff we have. We are doing both of these things and beginning to see results, but we have much more to do. Making a difference in both the hiring and retention of faculty starts with leadership. In recent years, CUNY has greatly increased the share of

black, Hispanic and female leaders among its college presidents, placing a diverse group of eminently qualified individuals in these highly visible positions. Across CUNY's 18 undergraduate colleges, the president... on the presidential level, half of CUNY presidential leadership are black and Hispanic, and seven of the 18 CUNY presidents are now women. In terms of new faculty hiring, we have started to see higher rates of black and minority hiring recently. In 2016/2017, 44 percent of all new, full time faculty hires at CUNY were members of federally protected minority groups, up from 30 percent in 2013/2014. Fifty of these new hires in 2016/2017, 50 of these or 15.1 percent were black faculty. In the past academic year, 2017/2018, at the recommendation of a faculty diversity working group, co-chaired by Presidents Jose Luis Cruz, who is here today and President... and the president of Brooklyn College, Michelle Anderson, Chancellor Milliken and I asked campuses to step up training, technical support and the monitoring of faculty searches in departments where data showed us that the... that the share of minority faculty falls below benchmarks of labor market availability. This is the place where we have

the most need and the most opportunity to make a difference. The goal was and is to create a greater degree of transparency, innovation and accountability for faculty diversity in these searches. While this work has just begun, again the committee began it's work last academic year, we have seen departments adopt innovative and research based practices like expanded outreach to a wider array of professional organizations, early, intensive engagement with historically black colleges and, and universities, the use of conferences to identify promising minority candidates and invite them to present their work on our campuses. We have early data from last year's efforts which tracked a subset of total new hiring, 110 completed searches in areas where there was, excuse the term colleagues but it is the official term, underutilization which means the share of minority faculty falls below the benchmarks of labor market availability. So, 110 completed searches in areas of underutilization, 51.6 percent of the hires from these searches were from federally protected minority groups and they include 14 black faculty. We are continuing this intensive support this year and we are still working on completing the uncompleted

searches. So, these are... these are preliminary data. CUNY's graduate students at the Graduate Center and its other graduate and professional schools are the most diverse doctoral students nationwide and these students allow us to cultivate a robust and diverse pipeline of future faculty members. Now hiring more minority faculty will not by itself accomplish our diversity objectives if we do not do more to retain and advance the diverse faculty we already have. Our important work in retention and advancement of minority faculty has been deeply informed by the COACHE survey of faculty satisfaction. This tool, developed by the Harvard Graduate School of Education and last administered in 2015, showed us the CUNY faculty of color in particular yearned for more opportunities for promotion and advancement and senior leadership and more departmental collegiality. We have begun addressing these concerns through a range of initiatives, including diversity and inclusion conferences, implicit bias training, faculty publication programs and a diversity projects development fund. Here too the Faculty Diversity Working Group has made recommendations and we are implementing new initiatives. Let me describe a few.



In fall, 2017, Chancellor Milliken and I established the Chancellor's Opportunity Fund that promotes strategic recruitment and retention efforts across the disciplines with a significant financial investment. That fund continues to this day and to date, has made 10 awards. Of those ten awards, three were used to successfully retain black faculty who had offers to go elsewhere. The CUNY Mellon Faculty Diversity Career Enhancement Initiative develops sustained mentorship for junior faculty with an emphasis on faculty from underrepresented groups using reading... research writing seminars, a series of professionalization workshops and the like. Currently, this initiative works with Queens, Hunter, Brooklyn and city colleges, the four Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow serving institutions at CUNY. A new program in, in its second year is the Mid-Career Faculty Fellowship Program. This addresses CUNY's goal of retaining and advancing a diverse faculty by providing support and resources to help tenured assistant and associate professors advance. This... we find that many faculty of color and women languish at the associate professor level. So, we have instituted a program that provides mentorship and professional

developments of... professional development of the 21 participants this last year, 16 were from underrepresented groups and seven of those fully one third of the group were black faculty. I am especially excited to tell you about Diversifying CUNY's Leadership; A CUNY Harvard Consortium among CUNY, Harvard Graduate School of Education and the Harvard Club of New York Foundation. This is a brand-new program that aims to cultivate a diverse group of future CUNY leaders by providing best in class professional development for faculty and staff interested in leadership opportunities at CUNY. When we got this grant a year and a half ago, there was tremendous excitement across the university, 72 faculty and staff across CUNY applied to participate and eight were selected along with President Claudia Schrader, who you'll hear from soon and who is participating as a mentor to the cohort. Of the nine leaders who were selected in a competitive process, five are black and one leader identifies as black and Latino. The program launched this past summer, we sent nine leaders to the Harvard Institutes free of charge and the program components include training and additional mentorship and development

opportunities. I learned last week that the Harvard Foundation has committed to another round of funding next year, which is very gratifying. President Schrader, our newest President, a transformative leader committed to diversity and a black woman who has risen through the ranks at Medgar Evers College and Bronx Community College and now leads Kingsborough Community College, will share more about her experience in the Harvard CUNY program and her role as a mentor to the cohort later today. Turning now to the topic of black and African American programs at CUNY, I want to state that these are important interdisciplinary areas of study at the university allowing students to examine the history, sociology, sociology, culture, science and technology and more through the critical lens of racial equity in our country and beyond. CUNY has long been committed to this kind of learning. Five CUNY senior colleges offer majors and degree programs in black or African American studies, these are Brooklyn, City, CSI, Hunter and Lehman Colleges. The Graduate Center offers an advanced certificate in Africana studies to currently matriculated doctoral students. Additionally, Baruch, John Jay and New York City Tech

have a black Africana and African American studies department respectively offering a range of coursework and minors, but not a major or degree program. Enrollment and degrees granted by these programs is growing modestly across the university. Between fall 2013 and fall 2017, enrollment in majors grew from 165 to 193 degrees granted in black or Africana studies generally is up from 58 to 65 in that same time, time period. The largest programs are at City, Hunter and Lehman Colleges. Many more students are taking courses offered by these departments than five years ago. So, enrollment in courses is sharply rising. By fall 2017, 6,159 students were enrolled in courses in black or Africana studies up from 5,223 in fall 2013, that's an increase of 18 percent. Let me quickly describe two examples of our Africana studies department programs. Brooklyn College's Africana studies department is one of the oldest in the nation founded more than 40 years ago with support from the Ford Foundation. Given the department's solid reputation and the breadth of its offerings covering the black diaspora of the African, African American and African Caribbean studies experiences, student enrollment has

remained robust at Brooklyn. the department engages in interdisciplinary collaboration by supporting the Shirley Chisholm Project on Brooklyn Women's Activism and the Caribbean studies program and women's studies programs. Brooklyn's Africana studies programs cross lists 40 percent of its courses with departments. Second, City Tech's department of African American studies offers a broad array of academic coursework and cultural activities related to the African diaspora. Even though City Tech does not offer a major, the department has seven full time faculty and soon will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Each semester, 1,000 students enroll in more than 30 classes that cover the history, politics, literature and arts of the peoples of the African diaspora. CUNY values diversity and is committed to diversifying the ranks of its faculty. It's also committed to supporting robust meaningful black studies programming. Even as perhaps the most racially and ethnically diverse university in the world, CUNY's commitment to colleges that are inclusive and diverse at their highest levels and throughout the faculty ranks has never been more central to its mission.

Chair Barron, I want to make it clear that while we

are investing and while we are making new investments and making progress, we know we are by no means where we want to be and where we need to be on this. We also know that progress is uneven among our colleges and within disciplines and departments. Continued progress requires strong leadership from the top, it requires strategic investments and it requires constant vigilance. Our Board of Trustees, let by Chairman Bill Thompson, is itself the most diverse board in CUNY's history and the board has made faculty and leadership diversity a priority. So, have I, and so will anyone CUNY chooses as it's permanent Chancellor. In fact, we have announced that CUNY will appoint it's first Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion to be selected by and reporting to the new Chancellor directly. Meanwhile, I am pleased to tell you that there is evidence of a deeper cultural change throughout the university. Our Presidents and senior leaders in the central office and throughout the colleges are committed to this work and to moving the needle on faculty and leadership diversity, they're starting their own innovative programs not just to meet targets but because they feel the moral, societal and academic imperative to better serve our

1 students. It is now my pleasure to invite President  
2 Jose Luis Cruz of Lehman College to testify about the  
3 work of the Chancellor's Faculty Diversity Working  
4 Group and his efforts at Lehman College to address  
5 faculty diversity.  
6

7 JOSE LUIS CRUZ: Thank you Chancellor,  
8 Chair Barron and members of the Higher Education  
9 Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify  
10 before you on important issues of faculty diversity  
11 and African American studies programs. My name is  
12 Jose Luis Cruz and I have the privilege of serving as  
13 President of Lehman College of the City University of  
14 New York, the only CUNY senior college in the proud,  
15 resilient borough of the Bronx. And in the past year,  
16 as Chancellor Rabinowitz indicated, I've had the  
17 honor of serving as Co-Chair of the University's  
18 Faculty Diversity Working Group. Based on my own  
19 personal experience, both as a former faculty member  
20 and longtime academic administrator and the deep  
21 discussions with members of the working group, which  
22 includes eight other campus presidents, two vice  
23 chancellors and a university dean, it is clear to me  
24 that the hard, important work of building a diverse  
25 faculty is as much about the implementation of best

practices as it is about empowering better practitioners, practitioners who can not only design, develop and implement effective search processes that yield highly qualified hires from a diversity of backgrounds, but who are also able to nurture and support them through the reappointment, tenure and promotion process by sustaining a highly inclusive campus climate. Lehman College, a designated Hispanic serving institution with more than 14,000 students in 170 plus undergraduate and graduate programs, is an excellent example of how institutions can accelerate progress through these types of intentional efforts. As the top ranked vehicle of upward minority... mobility among our nation's minority serving institutions and with a student body that represents 131 countries, creating a truly diverse, inclusive campus is imperative at Lehman. Indeed, eight and a half years ago, my predecessor, Dr. Ricardo Fernandez, came before this committee. In his testimony, he painted a picture of a college deeply committed to the university's affirmative action, equal opportunity and diversity policies because of the campus community's strong belief that and I quote, "a diverse workforce enriches the intellectual



discussions, promotes cultural competency, and strengthens our ability to prepare our students to live and work in a global society." At the time, President Fernandez reported that in the previous five years total full-time minority faculty had grown from 23.4 percent to 26.9 percent but more importantly he foreshadowed that significant gains would be made in the ensuing decade in support of the college's 2009 through 2019 strategic plan, which included diversity as a core institutional value.

Today, I am pleased to report that on issues of faculty diversity, Lehman is trending upward and moving forward. As of last week, the department of Human Resources reports that Lehman employed 377 full time faculty of which 37 percent are faculty of color. This represents an increase of ten percentage points in the proportion of full-time faculty of color, a gain made more impressive by the fact that the full-time faculty employment has decreased from a total of 384 to 377 since President Fernandez's testimony. The diversity gains registered in recent years at Lehman are perhaps best illustrated by a breakdown of Lehman's full-time faculty by rank.

While faculty of color currently represents zero

percent of the college's distinguished professors and only 18 percent of the full professors, they represent 35 percent of associate professors, 47 percent of assistant professors and 50 percent of lecturers. This profile is significant because it suggests that if an addition to perfecting our college's recruitment and hiring practices, we are able to retain our current faculty of color and help them progress through the academic ranks, the increase in the percentage of full time faculty of color that we will register in the next five years, as we enter the second half of Lehman's first century, will be even more impressive proportion than it has been to date. Turning now to our academic programs. As an institution with deep roots in the liberal arts, Lehman works hard, day in and day out to live up to the ideal articulated, articulated upon our founding 50 years ago, of enriching the human spirit and offering to as many as can realize their potential the opportunity to be so enriched. Lehman's department of Africana studies is one important vehicle for advancing this ideal. The department offers a 36-credit major and a 15-credit minor. It employs six full time faculty, has an additional

full-time faculty through a joint appointment with Latino studies and ten adjuncts and is recruiting for another full-time faculty as we speak. As of fall 2017, there were 47 majors and 30 minors, a total of 50 majors obtained their degrees this past summer, that's almost twice as many majors in Africana studies that obtained their degree just three years ago. But these numbers do not tell the entire story, as the department reaches many students at the college beyond majors and minors; courses from the department are well represented in the Pathways General Education Curriculum that all students must complete. At Lehman, courses from Africana studies department comprise a significant number of courses in the world cultures and global issues and creative expression distribution areas. Faculty from the department also teach course sections of our upper division college option requirement. Nearly 1,200 students were impacted through these courses this past academic year, that's ten percent of our overall student body. Indeed, ethnic studies programs across the country have a long history of fueling multigenerational and transformational change. And it is... and this is true both at the personal and

societal level, as a story you will soon hear of the ascension of my colleague, Dr. Claudia Schrader, to the presidency of Kingsborough Community College, so vividly illustrates. In closing, I want to state that in my two plus years at Lehman, both in my role as President and Co-Chair of the University's Faculty Diversity Working Group, I can attest to the commitment of every campus in the system to recruiting and retaining a world class faculty that reflects the rich diversity of our student body and to building and maintaining robust ethnic studies programs that further our University's commitment to inclusive excellence. We know we can and must do better and we are doing the hard work that this requires. Thank you very much.

VITA RABINOWITZ: Thank you President Luis. Now it is my great pleasure to introduce President Claudia Schrader...

CLAUDIA SCHRADER: Thank you. Good morning Chairperson Barron and members of the Higher Education Committee of the City Council. I am humbled to provide this testimony to you today on African American departments and programs and the hiring of black faculty at the City University of New York.

This is a topic that's deeply personal to me. When I entered Rutgers University in 1986 as an eager freshman, I just knew I would major in journalism. But my major in journalism was not all what I thought it would be. As the only black student in many of my classes, I would raise my hand only to be ignored. When I was acknowledged, my contributions were dismissed in favor of other students whose contributions were often a carbon copy of my own. Most importantly, there was little or no opportunity for me to do what I loved to do in the first place, which was write. Disillusioned, I sought refuge in the arms of the Department of African studies and my world opened up. I audited courses by Ivan Van Sertima and Amiri Baraka, I went to lectures by Kwame Toure and Angela Davis. I fell in love with the great works of Zora Neal Hurston, James Baldwin and Richard Wright. I fell in love with the critical and creative writing that I was finally able to do. And I fell in love with learning about the African diaspora, my people and our inextricable link and impact on the world. And most importantly, in a world that often determines what beauty is and isn't, I fell in love with myself as a black woman and for the first time I

thought that I could do anything I set my mind to. My Africana studies major provided me with fertile ground from which I grew as a professional. It was... it was my papers on the link between young black men being placed in special education and their incarceration rates that sparked my interest in special education and my subsequent graduate work at Teachers College in Special Ed. Africana studies was a fertile ground which I sowed through my work as a home based developmental specialist in Brownsville, East New York and other underserved areas in Brooklyn helping to support the development of infants with developmental delays, delays and thwart their fall into special educations and the prison pipeline. Africana studies was the fertile ground which nurtured my completion of a doctorate in International and Transcultural Studies and my first full time position as a faculty member at Medgar Evers College in the Teacher Education Department. I cut my teeth at Medgar and the rest, as we would say, is history. I advanced through the administrative ranks to associate provost and then Provost at Bronx Community College where I spent the last five years and where during my tenure, I attended to the hiring,

retention and success of faculty of color and closing the achievement gap for black and Hispanic students and the success of all students. I am now proud to continue this work at Kingsborough Community College where I serve as the institution's first black president. From where I stand, the university has made marked progress in forwarding the agenda of diversity, equity and inclusion. I know that there's much work to be done not only to recruit and hire faculty of color but to retain them on campuses and in climates at our conducive to their growth and success. The university recognizes this as do I. As provost at BCOMMITTEE CLERK I worked to ensure that our faculty reflected our student body and were part of all academic departments. I encouraged faculty and staff to avail themselves of opportunities created by the CUNY Office of Recruitment and Diversity such as funding for research, support for scholarly writing and the development of programs that advance diversity and improve campus climates. When data generated by the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education, the COACHE survey, revealed that our women and faculty of color took... women and faculty of color did not feel adequately supported

towards being promoted and receiving tenure, BCOMMITTEE CLERK took decisive action. We revised relevant materials to ensure criteria were clear and consistent and the information was accessible and developed workshops to provide support to faculty preparing for promotion at each level and tenure. The university's commitment to the professional development of faculty of color is further demonstrated in the development of the CUNY Harvard Consortium leadership program. I was fortunate to be sponsored by the University to participate in Harvard's Institute for Educational Management, but I'm even more excited to serve as a mentor to the Consortium's first cohort, a dynamic group of eight faculty and staff of color which include two black men and three... two black women and three black men who I'm confident will be CUNY's next generation of leaders. In closing, there is an African proverb that says, "we bequest two things to our children, one is roots and the other is wings". I'm confident and living proof that programs in black studies will provide the same for students who chose to embrace it as I did; a solid liberal arts foundation, deep roots



of personal fulfillment, respect for others and the wings to make a difference. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I want to thank the panel for your testimony and we're going to jump right into questions and the Chancellor has indicated that she has another pressing engagement so I'm going to go straight to the heart of the matter. Thank you so much again for your testimony and while you indicate the numbers of black faculty have increased, the bottom line is its flat.

VITA RABINOWITZ: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So, we have leadership, the CUNY leadership and the graduate level does not reflect at all any new hires that are black, getting a lot of feedback here, any new hires that are black. We know that as persons are hired by departments that the od boy network... I'm getting some feedback if you can check the system... thank you. we know that the old boy is the one that's responsible for bringing in new faculty. As I looked at the new hires, you have a report which talks about... the quarterly report on faculty diversity published January 2018 with data from July 2016 through June 2017. Of the new hires at the professorial level 53

percent were white, at the lecturer, lecturers and instructional level that represented 47 new white hires as opposed to seven new black hires. When we look at the senior colleges, 57 percent of the new hires were white with 94 new hires at the professorial level and only 29 black. At the lecturer's level and instructors' level at the senior colleges, 37 were white and only three were black. At the community colleges, 44 percent of the new hires represented those who were white being 29 positions as opposed to 14 for blacks. When we look at the new hires at particular schools, some of the highest were 60 percent at City College who were white, 83 percent at the school of medicine, 69 percent at Hunter, 64 percent white hires at Lehman, 57 percent at Queens and these were the levels of professorial level as well as lecturers and instructors. So, part of the reason I think that its flat is because we continue... we can't just look at the absolute numbers and talk about increases, how does that fit in the totality and when it stays flat we can't pat ourselves on the back to say we're hiring more people.

VITA RABINOWITZ: Chair Barron if I... if I may, one of the... there, there are issues in hiring

1 and we know that, we also have retention issues that  
2 I want to turn, turn, turn to in a minute because we  
3 know that faculty of color including black faculty  
4 leave CUNY at higher rates than white faculty do but  
5 on the matter of faculty hiring, one of the analysis  
6 we want to do is the number of offers made to black  
7 faculty that are... that are not accepted because  
8 faculty have better offers anywhere... another words  
9 we're looking to get behind the reason we're not  
10 moving the needle. Last year we had a better year  
11 than the... than the statistics that you've read, in  
12 the most recent round it appears that 50... a little  
13 more than 15 percent of new hires were black but  
14 those are our latest, very latest statistics up until  
15 2017 those numbers... I can't verify those numbers  
16 because I don't have them in front of me, but they  
17 sound about right, it's true... [cross-talk]

18  
19 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Well according to  
20 this report as I've read it, it's 12 percent of new  
21 hires that are black, full time, I'm talking about  
22 full... [cross-talk]

23 VITA RABINOWITZ: Right, right... [cross-  
24 talk]

25 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...time... [cross-talk]

1 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION 36  
2 VITA RABINOWITZ: Right... [cross-talk]  
3 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...that are black and  
4 that's... [cross-talk]  
5 VITA RABINOWITZ: ...that's about... yes.  
6 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, that's, that's  
7 a problem... [cross-talk]  
8 VITA RABINOWITZ: Yes... [cross-talk]  
9 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...and you talked  
10 about half of the 18 undergraduates... [cross-talk]  
11 VITA RABINOWITZ: Presidents... [cross-  
12 talk]  
13 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...Presidents are  
14 black... [cross-talk]  
15 VITA RABINOWITZ: Or, or Latino.  
16 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Black or Latino...  
17 [cross-talk]  
18 VITA RABINOWITZ: Yes... [cross-talk]  
19 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes, I think it, it  
20 was four and four now it's five and four but you, you  
21 don't have that same level of representation of  
22 blacks at the higher levels of CUNY... [cross-talk]  
23 VITA RABINOWITZ: In the central office...  
24 [cross-talk]  
25

1 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION 37

2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: No... central office...

3 [cross-talk]

4 VITA RABINOWITZ: That's correct... that's

5 correct... [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...graduate center,

7 university deans, it's pretty much zero so... and, and

8 those are the levels that implement the programs that

9 you say are important... [cross-talk]

10 VITA RABINOWITZ: Right, right... [cross-

11 talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So, if you don't

13 have people at those levels to, to demonstrate that

14 this is an important issue you're going to continue I

15 think to get increasing numbers but to remain flat

16 and I, I hear your point about being able to retain

17 but I'd like to also know of the total number and I

18 didn't have it in the documentation that I have here,

19 it was in previous reports on CUNY Diversity of the

20 Workforce, how many people applied... [cross-talk]

21 VITA RABINOWITZ: Right... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...how many people

23 were interviewed... [cross-talk]

24 VITA RABINOWITZ: Right... [cross-talk]

25

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...and how many people accepted so we need to have that broader picture as well.

VITA RABINOWITZ: You, you are absolutely right and that is something that the faculty diversity working group has been tracking. We also want to do exit interviews Chair Barron, so we can understand why people leave but you're right, we need to do better jobs of tracking our hires, making sure that, that the percentage of people invited for interviews reflects the percentage in an applicant pool. I believe that this year, the first year that we started tracking, in fact... President Cruz you've, you, you may know the numbers better than I do if you could discuss that.

JOSE LUIS CRUZ: So, in the year since we established the Chancellor's Faculty Diversity Working Group one of the major areas of focus of the group was to really look at the searches for this past year. If we're going to fund a certain number of searches let's look... pay particular attention to those searches that are for programs that have underutilization and make sure that we track every single step of the way to identify where the, the

roadblocks are to yielding a large number of diverse hires ultimately. From the searches that were conducted last year, the preliminary data that we have of the 90 searches in, in departments that had underutilization that were completed and verified 45 percent of the applicants for those 90 searches were from underrepresented minority groups yet 54.4 percent of those hired were from the represented minority groups so it, it looks like that tends to be the case when you're very focused on, on outcomes... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: Right... [cross-talk]

JOSE LUIS CRUZ: ...it makes a difference and I have... I can share some data specific from Lehman if you'd like but the system level that's what it looked like.

VITA RABINOWITZ: And, and Chair Barron let me say that we are getting very focused on outcomes and on documenting the process and further we are holding colleges responsible for faculty diversity in the performance management process.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: In your mast... okay, in the CUNY master plan for 2012/2016 it said that City College was going to create a counsel of

inclusion and excellence which would recommend strategies and approaches to ensure diversity in departments as well as departmental and executive committees, do we know what was the... what was the... what were the results of... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: Of City... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...and how... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: ...College?

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Right, right or if the... if CUNY has a broad program, are we tracking those results, I mean its great to put it in a plan and say this is what we're going to do but when I looked at the following year's plan for 2016/2020... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: Yes... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...I didn't see any follow up, I didn't see any data that talked about what the previous year's plan had implemented and said they would do. So, we can't just have it... you know throw it in a plan and say we're going to do it and not have some data, hard data that comes back and tells us, you know how we've... how we were able to achieve that.



VITA RABINOWITZ: I can tell you that as early as 2013 we started requiring, I was not in the central office then but I know that we started requiring diversity plans from every college and with, with targets and, and started supports but I can speak best from 2016 on Chair Barron when I've been in the office and, and the new master plan came out which I had a hand in, in writing and it is true that we did not... we provided data... a baseline data but I'm not sure that we had outcomes of all the programs that we had previewed in the 2012 to 2016 plan, I... that's right but we've... we're tracking things now and we're tracking things in a way we never tracked them before.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: In terms of the departments you indicated that, I think it said you were five schools that had...

VITA RABINOWITZ: Majors.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Majors in Africana studies...

VITA RABINOWITZ: Right.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: What, what are the requirements, who determines if there's going to be

an Africana study department or any other studies department, what, what makes that determination?

VITA RABINOWITZ: What... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Is that a college president decision... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: The college... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...is it... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: ...president is the ultimate decider, of course there has to be faculty will, the usual case there would be that, I believe it's seven faculty that exists in other departments or sometimes new people might be hired to... who are willing to be part of the new department but it's ultimately the president's decision, if the president will commit the resources, departments are expensive entities, they require staff, they require other than personnel service budgets, they require most, most precious, most expensive full time faculty lines... departments and must have... at CUNY departments need to have a minimum of five faculty or if the number falls beneath five a commitment to get to five full time faculty in the program to make it a department, programs don't have those same rules.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And what would be the rank that would be required of the faculty in a department?

VITA RABINOWITZ: Okay, yes do you know?

CLAUDIA SCHRADER: I think as long as they're full time faculty and there's interest with the president's blessing in terms of the budget, facilities, willingness to hire more faculty. Another important component is student interest, if there are students who are interested in seeing a particular major then it can be developed, and you can be a full-time faculty member which means you can be a lecturer or an instructor with a particular knowledge base that can participate in the writing of the degree program.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So, what do we expect of schools that have a department with only two or three full time persons, if that department is in fact listed in their catalog and described as offering classes what do we expect the president to do to ensure that you have the faculty there that can provide the sections or courses that are needed so that students would be encouraged, I'm interested in it as you indicated helped to direct you when you

1  
2 were at Rutgers, how do we then support that if we  
3 don't have the adequate number of personnel and what  
4 would be the expectation of a time period to fill  
5 those kinds of vacancies so that students don't say  
6 listen I can't continue to stay in this department  
7 because they don't have the course selections that I  
8 need to gather my credits to be able to graduate in a  
9 timely fashion?

10 VITA RABINOWITZ: Obviously if the  
11 department falls to say three or four full time  
12 faculty there needs to be a commitment to build that  
13 strength, there should also be if the department has  
14 shrunk... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Is the mic on?

16 VITA RABINOWITZ: I'm sorry, okay, I said  
17 that if a department has shrunk significantly and is  
18 in the state of having three or four members because  
19 people have left you would want an analysis of why  
20 people left because that's, that's an important part  
21 of the picture and what you can do to get back to  
22 strength there one way to go would be to promise an  
23 investment based the department... again it's a... it's a  
24 negotiation and a conversation between the leadership  
25 and the faculty about what is the direction of this

department, how do we... you know what is our best future as a... as a unit that produces scholarship and that educates our students and how should that vision inform our hiring and our direction with regard to academic programs.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I would think that a college president who has established departments across the various disciplines would want to make sure that the appropriate support financial... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: Yes... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...and otherwise is given and I would question why if over a period of time that issue is not addressed why it has not been addressed.

VITA RABINOWITZ: You're right, an analysis needs to be made, you, you are absolutely right, we... there are... there are reasons that departments fall into difficulty and it happens in, in many other areas including foreign languages and you do expect leadership to take a constructive role.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: What role does the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees and those other bodies, what role does... do they... do they play in

finding out why this is happening, why it hasn't been addressed?

VITA RABINOWITZ: Why, why it hasn't been addressed. Frankly the Chancellor has not taken an active role in departmental business on the campuses to my knowledge Chair Barron, I've only been the Chancellor for less than four months... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: ...but I've not seen that but I've been university provost and I've not seen that level however if invited in by the department or the... or the president I think it... you know it, it could be appropriate but again only do so carefully, presidents are the Chief Executives of their institutions and one doesn't... one, one needs to respect that as well.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I certainly do, you know as... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: Yes... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...having been a principal in the Department of Education, I certainly understand that the person at the head... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: Right... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...and the person with the obligation to address all of the issues has to give that... have to be given that kind of responsibility and I, I certainly understand that. I have more questions but I'm going to turn now to Council Member Holden who has some questions.

VITA RABINOWITZ: Yes, thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thank you Chancellor. I have... having served on the P and D in my department at City Tech for almost 20 years... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: ...and been involved in hundreds of searches for... and we tried to get black faculty but got little help from the administrations over the years, we would do searches... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: ...and we'd get back stacks of resumes, but we had no way of knowing who... you know the ethnicity or any... or you know background of the person, the race of the person let's say. So, we had to go out actually and recruit ourselves black faculty and we did and I always

1 thought and I mentioned this at one of the hearings,  
2 we had over 100 adjunct faculty which the  
3 administration to this day really were... they were  
4 reluctant, they always thought the grass was greener  
5 on the other side, they always thought we should look  
6 outside the university or outside the institution, we  
7 would recruit from other states, which I could never...  
8 I said well you know... and then lose the faculty that  
9 would say... we offered... we gave them an offer and they  
10 would say well we can't afford to live in New York  
11 City... [cross-talk]

13 VITA RABINOWITZ: Right... [cross-talk]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: ...from Minnesota  
15 so we lost countless faculty like that but to the  
16 life of me... and by the way we did hire the Chairman  
17 of my department at that time actually recruited a  
18 black faculty member, that person is now the Chair of  
19 the... of the department, the first Chair, the first  
20 black Chair in the history of the department and  
21 several other black faculty members were terrific,  
22 adjunct faculty that we had in the department were  
23 terrific but it was very difficult to hire them so I,  
24 I think if the... you... the... if the university is very  
25 serious about hiring black faculty that they need to



look within in their adjunct staff and, and make... you know actually get involved in department searches. The administration did not help us in the searches, they would post in the usual places but there was no effort to, to recruit black faculty, most of our students were black so why not do that and we couldn't understand it. We'd have a tough time, we needed help from the university, we didn't get it. So, I think knowing and you see the numbers are flat and there's a reason for that because the university didn't have the will. So, if the university gets serious about this then the numbers will improve but as you can see the proof is in the pudding, we're not seeing... we're seeing a flat line, we're not seeing an increase so something needs to be done and we need to know, this committee needs to know in the future what you plan to do something better than what you're doing now because it's not working.

VITA RABINOWITZ: Council Member I

appreciate that but what I would say is this, many of the initiatives I've talked about are relatively new, they've been implemented frankly in the last couple of years. No one... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: But, but they have to trickle down to the... each institution because the college presidents somehow are not getting the memos.

VITA RABINOWITZ: I... listen, you've, you've got to hold me to this, you've got to hold CUNY to this, but I think they are getting the memo, I think... I'm... maybe I'm being an optimist and I will go to each of my colleagues, but I believe there has been in the past few years and I credit our Board with this, I credit... I, I credit many with, with this and I want to be a part of this movement, I see something of a culture change where this isn't even CUNY just saying you must do better, we're saying we must do better, we all bear responsibility for this but I'm going to ask Claudia or Jose Luis to, to add you own... [cross-talk]

CLAUDIA SCHRADER: I just wanted to add, it was a couple of years ago the university provided, I think it was the university that provided funding for adjuncts to become... into full time lines so long standing adjuncts colleges got I guess funding to turn them into full time position and, and, and I remember there was a lot of interest around that and

there were long standing adjuncts who could meet, you know, you know what we were looking for and they became full time faculty members and in addition to that I think recently, maybe as recent as two years ago, adjuncts can now teach up to three, three classes and that was impossible before and I just want to say that you have full time faculty in a department and nobody wants to be a very lean department but at the same time we can't... we can't, can't undervalue the role that adjuncts play in teaching because they bring such... sometimes a wide range of experience and a wealth of experience to the classroom as well so while you may not have a department that has, you know five or six faculty members you might have a very small department that needs to grow but then you have dynamic adjuncts who could really make a difference in the classroom as well so that should not, you know go undervalued.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: The only thing with the adjuncts they don't really get the office... they get one office hour if they have nine hours I think or six hours... no, nine hours, if they have nine hours of teaching load they get one hour... [cross-talk]

CLAUDIA SCHRADER: Six... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: ...off... six... is it  
six... [cross-talk]

CLAUDIA SCHRADER: Like six... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay, then it  
changed maybe slightly but... so they get one hour of  
office time which is not really a lot to mentor  
students. So, you know what, what I'm... you know over  
the years, yes, it has improved but it's very  
difficult for the P and B's or the appointments  
committee that we call to get help from the  
administration, I found it very difficult and as  
president of, of the college and welcome to the  
university as a president, it's terrific would you... I  
mean we advanced... let's say we advance three  
candidates for one position, many times the president  
or the deans would not even interview those  
candidates so... and I asked the president of Queens  
College if, if he would in... automatically interview  
the person that the P and B or the appointments  
committee advance and he said yes but my college  
president many times did not interview the people  
that we advanced so we kind of... we, we came in... we  
used to come in during the summers actually when we

were off to interview candidates, we'd work through the entire summer on our time and then we... not... the, the president would not even... or the deans would not even interview the person and that's what... that was frustrating.

CLAUDIA SCHRADER: I think that there's a different generation of leaders on the college campuses, as provost I interviewed all faculty, all finalists, if there were four finalists I wanted to see everyone and the president will meet with new faculty as well and I, you know will say Luis is shaking his head because I'm sure he does the same thing and I know I'm 90's in at Kingsborough, I'll be meeting the faculty so this is a different... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Right, well...

[cross-talk]

CLAUDIA SCHRADER: ...generation of college presidents... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: I hope so, thank you so much.

JOSE LUIS CRUZ: And if I may just add a, a local data point in reference to the Chancellor's mention that we have these new initiatives in place

that we are very confident will, will move the needle faster as we move forward. This past year as Lehman College conducted its 11 searches based on this concept of, of looking at every part of the search process in a very methodical way to eradicate underutilization, I'm proud to say that of the nine searches that we completed we hired 11 new faculty members, eight of which are representing minority groups so 73 percent so by focusing on the new approach the Chancellor mentioned on our campus we're seeing significant movement, we basically reduced underutilization in biological and biomedical sciences, mathematics, in physical sciences and psychology, which as you know are, are difficult disciplines to recruit for.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. The, the 2012/2016 master plan identified some initiatives that CUNY would use to promote faculty diversity and that was the CUNY Latino Faculty Initiative... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...the Faculty Fellowship Publications Program and the Diversity Projects Development Program so that was in the

2012/16 plan and now here in your testimony today you talk about the Chancellor's Opportunity Fund for strategic recruitment and retention, the CUNY Mellon Faculty Diversity Career Enhancement Initiative, the Mid-Career Faculty Fellowship Program and Diversifying CUNY's Leadership, a CUNY Harvard Consortium, so do we expect that each time we come up with a master plan there will be different initiatives and do we get to see an evaluation of what the prior initiatives were able to generate, what were the results, why we're no longer using that, it didn't work or we've achieved what we set out to do with that initiative, it's no longer relevant?

VITA RABINOWITZ: Right... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Because how can we get... how can we get to see growth if we're changing initiatives every four years rather than saying, we're going to enhance it or give us at least an explanation for why we don't see the same initiatives continued... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: Right, right. Some of those initiatives most certainly have continued... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: ...and have good results.

For example, the Faculty Fellowship Publication...

[cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: ...Program is not only  
continuing its vibrant... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: ...its... and there what it  
seeks to do is provide support for scholars, scholars  
of color, many who've worked... who work in  
interdisciplinary areas, work in areas that 30 years  
ago were not even respectable and now are recognized  
as important areas of scholarship, it enables them  
to, to meet criteria, to get promoted, tenured and  
all of that, those work well. The Latino Faculty  
Initiative was certainly a... an important initiative  
to increase the percentage of Latino faculty which  
lagged behind the explosion of Latino students in  
CUNY over the past decade and Latino faculty have  
increased in number at, at all ranks.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Is that initiative...

[cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: As... [cross-talk]



1 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION 57  
2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...still in place?  
3 VITA RABINOWITZ: Yes, it is. Yes, it is,  
4 and Chair Barron I can get you some figures on those.  
5 You mentioned another Mellon Program... [cross-talk]  
6 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Well in the 2012 it  
7 lists it, the Diversity Project Development Fund to  
8 support scholarly... [cross-talk]  
9 VITA RABINOWITZ: Yes... [cross-talk]  
10 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...research projects,  
11 other educational and professional activities...  
12 [cross-talk]  
13 VITA RABINOWITZ: Right, that... [cross-  
14 talk]  
15 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...creating diversity...  
16 [cross-talk]  
17 VITA RABINOWITZ: ...continues today.  
18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay...  
19 VITA RABINOWITZ: Yes. Yes, it does  
20 continue and again it is successful.  
21 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay.  
22 VITA RABINOWITZ: Okay.  
23 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay and so what is  
24 the status of the Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program  
25 which was implemented to diversify the pool of

potential faculty which follows along the issue of  
Council Member Holden's point?

VITA RABINOWITZ: The Post-Doctoral...  
[cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Fellowship Program...  
[cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: ...Fellow... Post-Doctoral  
Fellowship Program. Actually, I do not... is this the  
Mellon Funded Program Mr. Holden or is this...  
Councilman...

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Mellon funded.

VITA RABINOWITZ: Mellon funded, okay. I  
believe that is a relatively new program but I, I  
don't... the Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program, I  
confess Chair Barron I don't know, I'm, I'm... I will  
find... I will find out... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: ...for you and... [cross-  
talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...because it was a  
part of the 2012 master... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: Okay, then it's not...  
[cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...plan... [cross-talk]

1 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION 59  
2 VITA RABINOWITZ: ...a new program...  
3 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay...  
4 VITA RABINOWITZ: And I do not... I, I do  
5 not know.  
6 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay and the CUNY  
7 Diversity Scholar in Residence Program? I'm not sure  
8 which year that was in but again we have these... we  
9 have these initiatives that, that are... [cross-talk]  
10 VITA RABINOWITZ: Right... [cross-talk]  
11 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...implemented...  
12 [cross-talk]  
13 VITA RABINOWITZ: Right... [cross-talk]  
14 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...and then they fall  
15 off and we don't know what... [cross-talk]  
16 VITA RABINOWITZ: Or they change their...  
17 [cross-talk]  
18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...happened or they're  
19 not... [cross-talk]  
20 VITA RABINOWITZ: ...names or... [cross-talk]  
21 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...continued... that's  
22 fine... [cross-talk]  
23 VITA RABINOWITZ: ...which... that's right...  
24 that's right...  
25

1 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION 60

2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: That they evolve to

3 something else that's fine, but we need to be able to

4 track them... [cross-talk]

5 VITA RABINOWITZ: To track them... [cross-

6 talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...to be able to find

8 out... [cross-talk]

9 VITA RABINOWITZ: Fair point... [cross-

10 talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...what were the

12 results of all of that so we'll... [cross-talk]

13 VITA RABINOWITZ: Okay, okay... [cross-

14 talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...send you... we'll

16 send you a list of those.

17 VITA RABINOWITZ: Okay, great.

18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And, and then my

19 point comes to... I know you have to get ready to go

20 and I do want to respect your time...

21 VITA RABINOWITZ: No, thank you, I

22 appreciate that...

23 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: In regard to, you

24 said the Latino faculty initiative... [cross-talk]

25

VITA RABINOWITZ: Initiative, right...

[cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...was very  
successful...

VITA RABINOWITZ: Yes...

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: In increasing the  
number of faculty...

VITA RABINOWITZ: Yes...

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And that's good to  
know but once again in the totality we're saying that  
it's flat so what... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: Latino... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...can we do... [cross-  
talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: Yeah...

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: What can we do to  
focus on getting an increase, a significant increase  
in black hires that will move the needle from being  
flat at, at 15 percent?

VITA RABINOWITZ: You're... no, you're,  
you're right. Even the increase this year from 12 to  
15 percent not a... not, not a lot, right, I, I agree  
but it's... again this... the challenge is some... we have  
to meet it Chair Barron, we're, we're... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So, I think we need to get something concrete, we, we're agreeing on the concept and the principle and you know the values and how important and how great, but we have to get something... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: We do... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...concrete that makes it a reality.

VITA RABINOWITZ: Right...

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And I think that having the black and Latino representation at president's level is good, but it's got to be significantly reflected above and it's got to percolate down... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: Percolate down... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...to the departments as well... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: You're right... you're right.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And in terms of the departments when we were doing our studies we found that at City University I think they have the Latino,

black and Jewish studies department in one and I want to know how that happens.

VITA RABINOWITZ: Okay, I'm, I'm glad... I'm happy to tell you, it didn't happen... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: ...I, I... Chair Barron I, I know why you think that it, it... this is what you would call a... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I'm just saying what I saw and if it didn't happen I'm... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: It didn't happen.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay...

VITA RABINOWITZ: Its, its, it's an artifact of our computer coding in the registrar's office, those are... there is actually not Puerto Rican department or program, it's Latin and Latin American studies, those are three separate areas, they have no... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: ...relation to each other except that they are in City College's division in... of arts and the humanities but they are separate programs, I'm pleased to... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: ...say I, I did some digging after the question...

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, great.

VITA RABINOWITZ: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Do you have any...

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Just, just one more question. Do you now require departments, I mean I know it goes from the Chancellor's office to the Presidents of the... of the... each institution but couldn't you require each department in their searches to demonstrate how they were reaching out to black faculty... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: Yes... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: ...in, in a way and given the resources to advertise or to actually recruit from those institutions?

VITA RABINOWITZ: Yes, in fact we do require that, that the kind of advertising you talked about Council Member Holden where you didn't advertise in, in the like... in publications that reach Latino and, and black scholars that can't happen anymore, you have to... in order for a search to be approved you have to state what you're going to do and... [cross-talk]



COUNCIL MEMBER HODLEN: And how recent, recent is that though, is that within the last two years only?

VITA RABINOWITZ: Well we've certainly sharpened it in the faculty diversity working group. President Cruz might you say anything more about that?

JOSE LUIS CRUZ: So, as part of the faculty diversity working group and our focus on this past year's recruitment cycle a series of steps were put in place and one of them is that before a search can be launched an approved recruitment plan needs to be in place and so if there's underutilization in a particular search that search committee had to put together an advertising plan and, and communication with the chief diversity officer of the campus.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: But we need a report from the institution actually as an outcome, did they follow through and... you know we need accountability here at this point because I... again on the... on the department level we felt frustrated because we... many of our candidates were ignored and I don't think that should happen and the... and the college president should not participate in that.

JOSE LUIS CRUZ: Exactly, so, so

basically the way this... the process is structured this past year after that plan was put in place there was another check point to make sure that the pool was diverse before the committee could even select the short list and then another one at the end and before an offer was made there had to be a certification from the chief diversity officer that all of the steps had been complied with.

VITA RABINOWITZ: Chair Barron I'm afraid I, I need to, to go to... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, that's fine... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: ...to get to your...

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes, I appreciate that but if you're Presidents could stay, I just want to have a few follow up questions for them so that they'll be able to relay them to you, thank you and I know you have other staff that stays as well, thank you so much.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thank you Chancellor.

VITA RABINOWITZ: Thank, thank you... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay... [cross-talk]

VITA RABINOWITZ: Thank you both.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So, in terms of faculty demographics if you don't have the information perhaps you can give us a follow up, you talk... I would like to know across the university which of the academic disciplines that boasts the largest number of faculty? So, within... if you don't have it I would like to get that... [cross-talk]

JOSE LUIS CRUZ: We, we can provide that.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay and which college, which campus are both on the senior and, and community level has the most black faculty and which one has the fewest and how does it compare to the enrollment of black students at those... at those campuses and in terms of departments is the... I understand that it's under the purview of the college president but is their dollar ratio matched to the enrollment of students at the college which would determine how much money a college professor could designate to a particular department?

JOSE LUIS CRUZ: My understanding is it varies from college to college... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So, it's at the discretion of the president?

JOSE LUIS CRUZ: Yes, at the... at... I can speak about Lehman College... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes... [cross-talk]

JOSE LUIS CRUZ: ...basically there is a formula that we use for the other than personnel services... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Right... [cross-talk]

JOSE LUIS CRUZ: ...allocation based on enrollment and that's on enrollment not just for majors and minors but also takes into account the service component of the curriculum, faculty lines, there are other considerations that are taken into account, they'll look at trends in enrollment patterns, they'll look at disciplinary needs, accreditation needs of certain disciplines and based on the funding availability and the number of new lines that are available then decisions are made in consultation with the school deans.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay and a question that you would probably have to refer back to the Interim Chancellor that in June of 2018 the Board of Trustees received a Rockefeller Foundation gift in

the amount of 666 dollars... 666,666 dollars for...  
that's, that's what they gave... I'm glad you caught  
that, to support CUNY's initiatives to help diversify  
the workforce of the cultural sector so we'd like to  
know how, we'd ask that you respond in the future,  
how the gift was made to the research foundation, how  
much of that money will go directly to each student  
that's enrolled in the CUNY cultural core because we  
understand that's what it was earmarked for and is it  
only low income that's the qualifying factor for the  
fellowship or was perhaps raised for ethnicity a, a  
factor in awarding that and Council Member Holden do  
you have any questions, if not we'll move on. Okay, I  
just want to thank you and I was interested in  
knowing what were the organizations that you worked  
with in East New York.

CLAUDIA SCHRADER: I worked at downstate  
Medical Center... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

CLAUDIA SCHRADER: ...and I was a  
developmental specialist, so I worked with  
Kingsborough, Kingsborough, Kings...

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Kingsborough  
Hospital... [cross-talk]

CLAUDIA SCHRADER: ...Kings County  
Hospital...

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay.

CLAUDIA SCHRADER: ...and that was the  
hospital and we were going... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay... [cross-talk]

CLAUDIA SCHRADER: ...to the homes and  
working with infants.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, great. Thank  
you so much, appreciate your testimony, we look  
forward to getting answers to the other questions.

CLAUDIA SCHRADER: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you and we'll  
now call the next panel. Okay, the next panel will be  
Doctor, Doctor Arthur Lewin from Baruch College;  
Dionne Bennett from the African Studies Department at  
City Tech; and Assetou Kone, I hope I... Assetou Kone,  
please help with the name from City College, the  
Black Institute. You give it to the clerk. The lady  
that's right here...

[off mic dialogue]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes, have a seat.  
And I'm going to ask the counsel to administer the  
oath.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Good morning. Would you raise your right hands? Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

[panel affirms]

COMMITTEE CLERK: Please state your names for the record.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you, you may begin, just push the button and make sure the red light comes on and you'll be recorded.

DIONNE BENNETT: Hi, let me see... can you hear me? Okay, thank you so much for inviting us to be here. My name is Doctor Dionne Bennett, I am an Assistant Professor in the African American Studies Department at City Tech and I'm proud to represent the African American Studies Department and to bring greetings from our Chair, Doctor Marta Effinger-Crichlow who unfortunately wasn't able to be here, so she sent me, and I was very happy to do so. I want to thank the committee for holding this, this meeting and, and particularly thank you for your commitment to this issue which is very, very important to us. The African American Studies Department at City Tech has been in existence since 1969 so one of the earlier departments in the country. In fact, we offer

a rich interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary educational experience as we explore the African diaspora through the humanities and social sciences. We have five full time faculty members; 12 adjunct faculty and we all engage in what we consider robust research in our district work. We share our experiences in the field through replaced based learning and try to get... encourage our students to connect to the city of New York as their laboratory and their... a, a research site for them. We are glad to have institutional funding from the college to enable us to sponsor events like black solidarity day, Kwanzaa black history month and women's history month; these events feature intellectual community and cultural leaders as well as media and arts presentations and we are amongst the most prolific of the organizations on campus in terms... in terms of creating intellectual and cultural events and activities. Because we are a commuter campus and serve a diverse student population including a very large population of students of African descent these events are intellectually and culturally valuable to students of all backgrounds. We work with the student government association as well as the black male



1 initiative. We attempt to collaborate and connect  
2 with the student community both within and beyond the  
3 classroom, we don't think our work as educators ends  
4 while... when we walk out of the classroom in order to  
5 support the development of students into the  
6 intellectual, professional, ethical and creative  
7 leaders we believe they can be. African American  
8 Studies as a discipline on the labor of African  
9 American faculty both inside and outside of the  
10 discipline we believe play an essential role in  
11 fulfilling both the City Tech and CUNY mission of  
12 providing superb urban education to students who may  
13 possess limited resources but absolutely possess  
14 limitless potential. We recognize that the experience  
15 of our department may differ from that of other  
16 departments across the university and we would like  
17 to state that we support, support all efforts to  
18 ensure that every African American Studies Program  
19 and Department has the soul... full support of CUNY and  
20 we also support the hiring and retention of black  
21 faculty in all departments not just Africana Studies  
22 Departments and colleges throughout the CUNY system  
23 and if I may add just as an individual intellectual  
24 and citizen, I think it's important... I was inspired

1 by the Chairwoman's statement at the beginning and so  
2 I just added something, that it's important to  
3 remember that African American Studies is not a, a  
4 demographic depository, it is a discipline that  
5 defines and defends democracy and its most  
6 fundamental sense and that at times like these where  
7 we are a democracy in transition and some may find it  
8 vulnerable, African American Studies is particularly  
9 essential to the work that we as a society claim to  
10 be invested in doing. So, I want to just add that  
11 because I was inspired by what you said at the  
12 beginning. Thank you.

14 ARTHUR LEWIN: Thank you Councilwoman  
15 Barron and Councilman Holden for having this very  
16 important hearing. I want to talk about the  
17 disappearance of black faculty and black studies at  
18 Baruch College. Let us... let us place the issue of the  
19 shrinking black faculty at Baruch College and the  
20 dismantling of its black and Latino studies  
21 department in context. Since the 1960's, the prison  
22 population of the U.S. has increased tenfold from  
23 250,000 mostly white inmates to 2.5 million mainly  
24 black and Latino inmates. Most, and this is  
25 important, most of the babies born in the United

1 States today, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018 are children of  
2 color, this has been so for five years and the  
3 proportion is steadily increasing. Most of the  
4 children in the public schools in the United States  
5 as a whole, taken as a whole, are children of color,  
6 this has been so for five years and their proportion  
7 is steadily increasing. The Chancellor said something  
8 about majority, minority, I don't know what, what  
9 does that mean? Okay, the New York City public  
10 schools spend 23,000 dollars per student each year,  
11 yes, 23,000 dollars and blacks and Latinos, the vast  
12 majority of the student populous have a 33 percent  
13 drop out rate. There are precious few blacks or  
14 Latinos in New York City specialized high schools and  
15 their numbers in the senior colleges of CUNY are  
16 steadily decreasing. The disappearing black faculty  
17 at Baruch College and the elimination of the black  
18 and Latino studies department at Baruch, one of only  
19 two such joint departments in the nation is but one  
20 example of how this country is foolishly destroying  
21 its youth, the future of our nation. Focusing  
22 specifically on Baruch College, from fall of 2010 to  
23 fall of 2016, Baruch College hired 119 full time  
24 faculty, three of them were black, that's 2.5 percent  
25

the lowest number and percentage of black hires of all CUNY colleges. The next lowest was Staten Island, 4.6 percent of their hires were black, nearly twice that of Baruch College. Baruch College's own 2017 affirmative action report admits that if the college were hiring proportional to the available pool of candidates it's 505 full time faculty would have 35 more black professors and we don't have 35 now. Okay, but anyway... in recognition of this dismal fact the administration in its 2013 strategic diversity plan pledged that it would have periodic meetings with black faculty and Latino staff to uncover the problems they face in getting reappointed, tenured and promoted; five years later the first such meeting is yet to occur and they're drawing up another plan with a lot of other foolishness they never... that they never carry through, all kind of things are promised but nothing happens. One of the things that was said is... talking about full time faculty; I know Professor Holden knows this, that full time and tenure are not the same thing, people are not leaving Baruch College and other schools to go somewhere else they're leaving because they're not getting tenure. That's why they're leaving, they're being kicked out. The

problem of retaining black and Latino staff is particularly acute in the black and Latino studies department, it, it is currently down to just three professors. Now, you know the Baruch Administration will not allow it hire replacements for those that leave so I don't understand what was said about, you know if it drops below a certain level there has to be a commitment, what commitment, there is no commitment. We thus witnessed the slow deliberate destruction of the black and Latino studies department through unaddressed attrition and I've written everybody at CUNY central including Doctor Rabinowitz when she was provost and everybody down there, they don't respond. There have been six changes of diverse... of chief diversity office at Baruch College in five years, doubtless this contributes... and one person they, they, they fired her and brought her back, doubtless this contributes to the failure to address let alone resolve any of these issues. How come the most dysfunctional unit in the college just happens to be the one that promotes diversity and inclusion? What a coincidence. Baruch's black student population has been cut in half in recent years, this is part and process... part and

1 parcel of the overall trends that exclude and  
2 marginalize people of color in every single facet of  
3 this society. Sadly, the Baruch administration has  
4 abandoned CUNY's traditional wanted leadership role  
5 choosing instead to go with the flow, that's  
6 president Bolerstein, that's Provost David Christy  
7 and Dean Aldemaro Romero of the school of, of Liberal  
8 Arts and I don't want... you know just again, I don't  
9 understand this whole idea of minority and majority,  
10 I, I just don't get it. This country... we are the  
11 future of the country, if you... if you... if we're not  
12 educating the black and Latino youth of this country  
13 and we're not bringing black and Latino people into  
14 the mainstream we're not going to have any country.  
15 Thank you.

17 ASSETOU KONE: My name is Assetou Kone, I  
18 am a student at the city College of New York, I'm a  
19 junior. As a first generation African American I  
20 select most of my courses due to requirement but also  
21 what I wish to comprehend in life. I've selected  
22 courses such as Caribbean Heritage, Afro-Latino  
23 Literature and Political Systems of Africa, all these  
24 courses represented diversity within the black  
25 community and it makes me wonder how would a

department of African American studies be structured around those principles? An example, the University of Yale describes their African American studies as courses that are innovative, complex and instinctively African American social structures and culture traditions that Africans in the jasper have created which is really vague if you look at it. Once we take into account the era of post slave trade, how are we explaining the history of separation and distribution that the black community has endured and how that contributed to the social economic and political growth of the Africans in the Americas. If there is to be an African American studies in the City Universities of New York these details must be taken into account to either become a concentration or it's own department. The lack of a well-structured African American studies department may also be an explanation to the lack of black professors in the CUNY system. From 2014 to 2017, the hiring of black professors has been a stagnant 12 percent. While there are 24 percent black students in the city universities of New York and 30 percent Hispanic, contrary to the 22 percent white this number drastically goes down after graduate school. We see a

decrease of African Americans when it comes to professional studies and faculty hiring. These two situations are in direct correlation therefore as a black student I can only ask myself, how hard would it be if I wanted to become a CUNY professor and teach relevant courses that embodied true African American education. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you, I want to thank the panel for coming and for your testimony. Doctor Lewin just a couple of follow up questions. You talk about the fact that faculty is not leaving but is being kicked out...

ARTHUR LEWIN: Right...

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: How is that demonstrated?

ARTHUR LEWIN: Okay, it's demonstrated by the fact that when you're hired you're given a certain period of time, it can range from five to seven years in order... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Right... [cross-talk]

ARTHUR LEWIN: ...to get tenure in order to become, you know in order to become a permanent... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Right... [cross-talk]



ARTHUR LEWIN: ...person but what tends to happen is that each year as you move towards tenure they put more and more pressure on you, they, they, they try to find excuses to, to attack you, your work, your research, your... any, anything that they possibly can and then by the time you finally... time to be awarded tenure you just don't get it and, and these reports, these affirmative action reports that the schools put out they don't even differentiate what is tenure and what is full time, it just simply says full time so what you basically have is a revolving door, people coming in and leaving and then they say they can't find anybody. Professor Holden talked about how they wouldn't let him even, you know hire the, the local people, they love to say, we just... we just can't find anybody that's what they love to say, right, they love to do that and, and what they love to... and, and another thing I just want to say this, I'm not attacking my... the president of, of, of Kingsborough and, and the president of... was... Lehman, they may have a, a very well-integrated staff but that's why they were here, they're exception to prove the rule and what tends to happen is that anybody that tends to talk about these things they

tend to kick you upstairs, they, they, they tend to say well oh, okay let's, let's set up a committee, you go head it and you go take... you know hey... you know and, and nothing gets done, it's just public relations, that's all they do.

DIONNE BENNETT: So, I, I agree with everything that you're saying, and I think it is... if, if you're just counting bodies it looks like you have... [cross-talk]

ARTHUR LEWIN: Yes... [cross-talk]

DIONNE BENNETT: ...the bodies but it's at the tenure process that black faculty gets pushed out so that's one, one thing and so then... and then they get replaced at a lower level and so it looks like you have the same number of bodies but you actually don't have the bodies moving into the senior levels that have the actual influence in changing the culture of the... of the institutions so it looks fine, it looks stable but it's actually not always stable, it's often people getting pushed out before they can actually accumulate power and I'm going to have to apologize my PhD is in anthropology from UCLA, I think I may be... if I'm not the only person trained in psychologic anthropology, a black person trained in

1 psychological anthropology, I'm maybe one of two, I...  
2 it would be very difficult for me to get a job in an  
3 anthropology department, I'm in an African American  
4 Studies Department so what happens is the African  
5 American Studies Department be... kind of becomes the  
6 place where the black faculty is funneled and then  
7 the other departments take no responsibility of very  
8 little responsibility for recruitment and retention  
9 and then that puts this enormous pressure on, on the  
10 African American Studies Departments to kind of hold  
11 onto the faculty and if you have a strong department,  
12 you know it, it works out, if you have a weak African  
13 American Studies Department or if the department  
14 isn't supported that means that black faculty  
15 throughout the university or throughout the college  
16 kind of collapse. Also, the other thing that happens  
17 is the African American Studies Department becomes  
18 support sites for black faculty outside of African  
19 American studies so again if you don't have a strong  
20 department then you also don't have the support for  
21 black faculty outside of the department, so I just  
22 wanted to add that.

23  
24 ARTHUR LEWIN: Also I want to point out,  
25 you remember I was here a few years ago and it was a,

1  
2 a young lady with me that was here with us, a young  
3 lady and a young man and what happened was the young  
4 lady went to the best Ivy League schools, she was...  
5 she, she had the, the top ratings in her... in her  
6 department for teaching and they wouldn't even  
7 interview her, she ended up leaving and suing the  
8 college successfully with the ELLC and... [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Oh, I remember.

10 ARTHUR LEWIN: Right, she sued... she sued,  
11 she sued Baruch College and then another... the  
12 gentleman that was here, Mr... I don't want to give his  
13 name but the gentleman that was here he was the  
14 counselor and he was doing an excellent job, they  
15 just simply... you know they just simply ejected him  
16 and you know what happens, anytime you talk about  
17 these things what they do is they will have you go  
18 speak... they will... they will put out front somebody  
19 like the Dean of students, has nothing to do with  
20 hiring people but because they're black or Latino  
21 they are the spokesperson for these issues, they do  
22 that... they do that consistently.

23 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. I have  
24 another question, Council Member Holden.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Dr. Lewin thank you for your testimony, thanks to the panel. When did you write to the Chancellor about Baruch and... do you have... [cross-talk]

ARTHUR LEWIN: Over the past two years, I can give... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Two years... [cross-talk]

ARTHUR LEWIN: ...I can give you the correspondence... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: If you... never... yes, if you can do that, it... [cross-talk]

ARTHUR LEWIN: Never got any... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: You never got an answer?

ARTHUR LEWIN: Never, I wrote... I didn't just write... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: That's disgraceful... [cross-talk]

ARTHUR LEWIN: ...I never got an answer from the Chancellor nor... I wrote the whole cabinet including Dr... whatever... Rabinowitz, I wrote her too, never got anything back and, and the thing that's

galling is that when they point out things like if it drops below five they got to make a commitment, you asked her well who's... well it's up to the president, there's no enforcement, it's just... they just put things on paper and they waste your time. You see what happened is this, with the black and Latino faculty you publish and you still perish, you publish, they don't respect what you write and if you do write something good, you know it's, it's, it's... they'll always find something but the thing is you're making a good point Councilman... Councilwoman Barron, you're making a very good point that you need to have black and Latino faculty to mentor these black and Latino students and to show everybody that we are people of accomplishment and to include what we do in the curriculum. The reason you have a black studies department, a white... a black studies department, a Latino studies department, Asian American studies department, native American, lesbian gay department, etcetera, etcetera is because essentially what we have is white studies; we have male Eurocentric white studies from the bottom to the top of the curriculum right across the board.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: How, how can we... I appreciate all of your testimony and I appreciate the fact that a part of the reason this hearing is taking place is besides it, it's something that we're interested in is that a particular person said to me directly, this is a real issue and we need to address it and I said fine, we'll do that. How can we look to see how the information of what is going on, on the ground within the Ivy walls is collected in some type of centralized location or by a collective of people who understand what the issues are so that they can be brought to the public?

ARTHUR LEWIN: Okay, I think we have to have distinct... these things have to be brought out and publicized. For example, I will guarantee you that not one in 100 people in New York City know that we're spending 23,000 dollars per child with a 33 percent dropout rate, nobody knows that, right, I've written to the newspapers, there's, there's a show that replaced... like it is called as it... but... I don't what the show's called on, on channel seven... yeah, but they're not talking about here and now, you see, I've written them they don't put it out there, you turn on the news all you hear is nonstop Trump this,

1 Trump that. The two biggest issues facing this  
2 country are the 2.5 people in jail and the  
3 destruction of Puerto Rico, they say nothing about  
4 it. So, what I'm trying to say is we have to find a  
5 way to get this out to the people, you know I, I  
6 don't... you know this, this, this is great that we're  
7 doing this and maybe we could somehow get this into  
8 the papers or get it... [cross-talk]

10 DIONNE BENNETT: Social media...

11 ARTHUR LEWIN: Social media, we've got to  
12 do something.

13 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Right and, and  
14 that's the point that I'm raising, I would put out a,  
15 an offer to us to form a collective, to form an...  
16 [cross-talk]

17 ARTHUR LEWIN: Yes... [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...opportunity for  
19 people to join together like minded people who  
20 understand the situation as it exists to form a body  
21 of people who will say listen, here is the data of  
22 what's... and I'm not just talking about the numbers  
23 beyond just the numbers but the fact that at certain  
24 points, you know your contract has ended and you've  
25 not been tenured and you're out, those kinds of



things. There are actually three professors who reach out to me and let me know well this is what's happening at my campus...

ARTHUR LEWIN: Uh-huh...

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...but how can we extend that, how can we form a, a body of people that can say okay listen, call the black student... the black faculty organization of CUNY, whatever, whatever and deposit your information so that we can take collective action.

ARTHUR LEWIN: Right.

DIONNE BENNETT: I think... we need protection, I'm an untenured... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And that's part of the reason why I called this so that... [cross-talk]

DIONNE BENNETT: Yeah... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...I'm the Council Member, nobody's going to be able to say your jobs in jeopardy, but we need to get the information... [cross-talk]

DIONNE BENNETT: Right... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So that we can move forward on your behalf.

DIONNE BENNETT: So, a lot of us... so, I'm an untenured faculty member, I'm scared right now to say certain things like... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

DIONNE BENNETT: ...things that I'm just not going to say because it's not safe for me and we need a... we need a collective that protects... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes... [cross-talk]

DIONNE BENNETT: ...the people who know so... you know it's one of those things where the people who say don't know and the people who know don't say because they can't. We do need more senior faculty members. When the people are tenured they have more freedom and so if we prevent and there... I do think that people are prevented from becoming tenured. If people... if people don't get to be tenured then they are never in a position where they have the authority to tell the... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

DIONNE BENNETT: ...the complete truth so having structures what you're talking about as a collective I think would be really, really powerful because it could protect faculty... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

DIONNE BENNETT: ...for... at all different levels so that... and so that we can protect students, I went to Yale, I was laughing that you said Yale was vague, Yale is... it's worse than vague dear. I, I... my BA is, is, is from Yale so we, we need that, that kind of protection, I think... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

DIONNE BENNETT: ...a structure of protection. I think the other thing we do need and I'm not sure the best way to do this, is we do need some cultural transformation, one of the reasons I mentioned the role of African American studies as a democracy defining a... and defending structure is people act like this is just good for black people. African American Studies is not just good for black people, African American Studies is good for America, it is good for democracy, it is good for everybody and it deserves the respect and the defense of that and I think one of the things we, we need to do is we need to educate our peers who are outside of the discipline to understand the value of both us as, as people and what we bring to the intellectual and academic experience of CUNY and what the discipline

of African American Studies brings to the academic and civic work of, of the country, this is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, 2018 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discipline and I hardly hear anybody even talking about it but we wouldn't have had a black president if we didn't have African American Studies, that wouldn't have happened so I think we also need some cultural work in terms of the intellectual culture of CUNY so that we get the respect that the discipline deserves.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you.

ASSETOU KONE: I also want to say something... yeah, I just wanted to say I also think its very important to include students which was... just because they have very... a very large reach and are able to communicate between each other so I do think it's... this is very... obviously a discussion that definitely includes as well, student governments to have the... a public affair committee not only at... demand where are these reports, how many students of color and why are... why are these... why is this happening, why is this happening, I think that's definitely a discussion that's very necessary.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I want to thank you for coming and I want to say that I would love to be in touch after this event to talk about how we can establish that group that we talked about and make it a reality... [cross-talk]

ARTHUR LEWIN: We'll certainly... we'll certainly do that Council, Councilwoman... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay... [cross-talk]

ARTHUR LEWIN: ...Barron... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you so much...

ASSETOU KONE: Thank you all... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you... [cross-talk]

ASSETOU KONE: ...so much for listening to us, we really appreciate it... [cross-talk]

DIONNE BENNETT: Thank you... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you... [cross-talk]

ARTHUR LEWIN: Thank you...

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And we're going to call the next panel. We have Owen Brown from Medgar Evers College, Doctor Anthony Browne from Hunter College and Brenda Greene from Medgar Evers College.

Thank you, I'm going to ask the counsel to have... to administer the oath to you.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Please raise your right hands. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this committee and to respond honestly to Council Member's questions?

BRENDA GREENE: I do.

OWEN BROWN: I do.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Please state your names for the record.

BRENDA GREENE: Brenda Greene.

ANTHONY BROWNE: Anthony Browne.

OWEN BROWN: And Owen Brown.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you, you may begin with your testimony.

BRENDA GREENE: Good morning. Good morning Council Member Barron and Council Member Holden, thank you for leading this effort to ensure that the City Council Members become more aware of the status of black faculty and black studies and Africana studies in CUNY. I am Chair of the English Department at Medgar Evers College and Executive Director of the Center for Black Literature at Medgar

Evers College. My presentation will focus on black studies in CUNY. As the result of a survey that I conducted with black studies programs and departments within CUNY and also a review of the 2018 quarterly report on faculty diversity. The names black studies and Africana Studies are often interchangeable so for the sake of consistency, I will use the term black studies in this presentation. An overview of black studies in CUNY. Five senior colleges currently offer black... baccalaureate degree program... black studies in CUNY. These include City College, Brooklyn College, Hunter College, York College, and Lehman College. John Jay College, Queens College, New York City Tech and Baruch offer black studies minors or concentrations. The Graduate Center offers an Africana studies track within the Master of Liberal Arts degree and a certificate in Africana studies at the PhD level. The two senior colleges which offer no black studies programs are Medgar Evers College ironically and the College of Staten Island. The English department at Medgar Evers College offers an AA in African, African diasporic literature and has a BA in African diasporic literature under review. The social and behavioral... social, social and behavioral

sciences department at Medgar Evers College is working on a degree in Africana studies. Fall 2017 data revealed that the percentage of black studies.. black students at senior and community colleges is 24.7 percent with the highest percentage at Medgar Evers College and that is 84.7 percent. Black studies in this report is included under area, ethnic and cultural studies. The data from this report revealed that area, ethnic and cultural studies have the lowest number of black faculty hires. From 2010 to 2016, the number of black faculty hired in this area was eight. In 2016 to 2017, the number of black faculty hired was two. We have strong black studies programs across, across CUNY. Hunter, Lehman and City have strong majors. Hunter has 30 majors and 70 minors. Lehman has 59 majors and 49 minors and although City College does not have a black studies department, it has had as many as 93 majors and currently has about 60 majors. Lehman has seven full time faculty, one of whom has a joint appointment and 10 adjunct faculty. Hunter has five full time faculty and 14 part time faculty. City College currently has two faculty. It lost four faculty due to retirement or resignation in the last three years and the



1 faculty have not been replaced. In my survey I asked  
2 faculty across CUNY to identify the challenges and,  
3 and, and their recommended solutions in addressing  
4 black studies. The challenges are as follows:  
5 although nearly 25 percent of students in CUNY are  
6 black, the institutional support for programs  
7 reflecting black studies has been reduced over the  
8 last three years. Colleges have failed to replace  
9 faculty who have retired or resigned, thereby  
10 affecting program growth and the number of black  
11 studies majors. Faculty have cited a lack of support  
12 from the administration as a rational for  
13 resignation. In some colleges there are no full time  
14 or part time faculty directly connected to the black  
15 studies program. There's a high attrition rate for  
16 directors and coordinators of black studies program,  
17 programs. In one college, there have been five  
18 coordinators of black studies in ten years. The  
19 administration cancels upper level black studies  
20 courses, thus eliminating courses needed for the  
21 major and affection the retention of the program. One  
22 college reported that two black studies proposals  
23 submitted to CUNY within the past eight years for a  
24 major have been denied. Solutions. Black studies must  
25

be respected within the confines of the institution.

The number of students who enroll in courses within

black studies is not an issue. Students enroll in

black studies courses in high numbers when they are

offered. These courses should be supported within

degree programs and with full time faculty. Colleges

must use deliberate strategies that support and

retain black studies programs and faculty. CUNY

should create a black studies discipline council that

will be responsible for discussing and reviewing

black studies within CUNY. English literature courses

are not broadly represented in black studies, most

are social science courses, related courses. A, a

degree in African diasporic literature provides a

niche in CUNY and supports an interdisciplinary

approach to African diasporic literature. CUNY offers

no master's degree in Africana or black studies. The

Graduate Center should develop a black studies major...

a black studies master's degree program that is in

concert with the foundation of black studies as a

discipline and reflective of a broad range of

thinkers across disciplines. Data on black studies

programs and hires... black, black faculty hires within

CUNY diversity reports need to be documented and

1 should not be grouped under area studies. So, I'm now  
2 going to turn this over to my colleague Anthony  
3 Browne, who's Chair of the Africana and Puerto Rican  
4 and Latin Studies Program at Hunter College and he  
5 will be followed by Doctor Owen Brown, who's  
6 Professor of Sociology at Medgar Evers College. I  
7 also have attached to my presentation an overview  
8 that reflects the, the, the programs, the, the degree  
9 offers, the number of full-time faculty, part time  
10 faculty and majors in the senior colleges across  
11 CUNY, that's part of the presentation. Thank you.

12 ANTHONY BROWNE: Thank you Doctor Greene.

13 Good afternoon, I thank Councilwoman Barron,  
14 Councilman Holden for the opportunity to present  
15 today. I will focus my remarks on two crucial areas;  
16 the recruitment and retention of black faculty.  
17 According to 2017 data, university wide, 12 percent  
18 or 940 of CUNY's faculty are identified as black. The  
19 percentage of black faculty members varies  
20 significantly across senior and community colleges  
21 and within departments. CUNY can address these  
22 disparities through a targeted campus specific  
23 approach that would significantly increase the number  
24 of black faculty across departments at both senior  
25

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2 and community colleges. Recruiting black faculty.  
3 Recruitment of black faculty can be a challenge  
4 particularly in departments with an uneven history of  
5 tenured black faculty. A strategy that has been  
6 successfully utilized by both public and private  
7 universities to address faculty diversity is cluster  
8 hiring. A cluster hire would involve hiring a  
9 critical mass of black faculty members based on  
10 shared, interdisciplinary research interests. These  
11 hires could be in a single department or a cross  
12 disciplinary research area that would provide the new  
13 hires with a community of scholars that would reduce  
14 feelings of isolation and marginalization. For CUNY,  
15 building on the University's research, teaching,  
16 demographics and location, a cluster hire initiative  
17 would enhance the university's existing research  
18 capacity, contribute to new discoveries and  
19 applications of knowledge, and, and address real  
20 world problems that require cross disciplinary  
21 expertise. For example, a cluster hire initiative  
22 centered in Africana studies departments around the  
23 theme of black futures would attract black faculty  
24 whose teaching and research focuses on challenges  
25 facing urban areas that might include race and social

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justice, education and or health disparities, urban housing, poverty, policing and other topics that speak to persistent concerns facing New Yorkers.

Research would be coordinated through a black futures CUNY wide disciplinary group that would coordinate research, funding, cross disciplinary collaborations, and the dissemination of research. Retention of black faculty. Keeping faculty from exiting a university is a pressing challenge for institutions. A high turnover rate of professors of color is a familiar reality as many campus leaders don't acknowledge some of the issues that black faculty and other faculty of color face on predominantly white campuses or departments and how that climate affects turnover.

These issues include; feelings of isolation, the burden of invisible labor, and hostile workplace environments. Therefore, building an environment that is inclusive and equitable will go a long way in helping faculty members feel safe and less marginalized in their new departments. For instance, conducting a survey or focus group on the climate in a department and campus can assist in identifying and strategizing how to ensure inclusivity. CUNY has conducted climate surveys in the past and additional

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research that addresses the concerns of black faculty should augment prior data. Strong mentoring is an effective method for promoting retention among underrepresented groups. In fact, numerous studies have shown mentoring to be an effective way to recruit, retain and promote the advancement of faculty and that the absence of, or inadequate, formal mentoring has disproportionately negative effects on black and Latinx faculty. Many report feeling isolated from informal and formal professional networks which reduce opportunities to build broad-based networks necessary to successfully navigate the academy. The degree of association with supportive senior faculty as well as peers has been shown to be a strong predictor of success within the academy. In closing, as we move further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, CUNY is strategically positioned to significantly increase the number of black faculty through cluster hires who can unpack questions related to black futures and related concerns that can offer not only students but policy makers, researchers and community leaders new knowledge and tools to discern and address issues that cohere

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2 around persistent forms of racial and ethnic  
3 inequality. Thank you.

4 OWEN BROWN: Good afternoon. My name is  
5 Owen Brown and I'd like to begin by thanking Council  
6 Member Barron, Council Member Holden and members of  
7 the Higher Education Committee for the opportunity to  
8 address this most important issue of diversity within  
9 CUNY full time faculty ranks. I'm a professor with  
10 Sociology at Medgar Evers College. My remarks today  
11 will focus on the need for CUNY faculty reflect the  
12 diversity of the people who reside in New York City;  
13 the current state of African American or black  
14 faculty members employed by CUNY and finally, an  
15 important challenge that we all face. Historically,  
16 CUNY has helped immigrants afford a college  
17 education. This has led many of them to become  
18 productive workers and citizens who have contributed  
19 and how continue to contribute to the development of  
20 this nation and our great city. However, there is a  
21 lingering problem and that problem is the continuing  
22 marginalization of minorities in particular African  
23 Americans. This problem manifests itself in CUNY  
24 amongst its faculty and the area of full-time hires,  
25 tenure and promotions. According to a 2017 report by

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2 CUNY's Office of Human Resource Management titled  
3 Quarterly Report on Faculty Diversity, CUNY had 7,508  
4 full time faculty in 2016. Among its adjuncts, that  
5 number totaled 12,562. 918 blacks or African  
6 Americans were counted among CUNY's full-time faculty  
7 and 2,018 were classified as part time faculty  
8 members. Overall, African Americans or blacks  
9 constitute 12.3 percent of CUNY's 7,508 full time  
10 professors. While some would argue that this  
11 represents progress because the percentage of CUNY  
12 full time professors reflects the percentage of  
13 blacks who make up the American population, I would  
14 counsel caution. Here is an important example for why  
15 we all should be cautious in forming false  
16 conclusions based on institutional data. CUNY full  
17 time faculty members do not reflect the demographic  
18 reality of New York City or CUNY students. For  
19 example, New York City's population is 44.6 percent  
20 white, 27.5 percent Hispanic, 25.1 percent black and  
21 11.8 percent Asian American. But overall 60 percent  
22 of its full-time faculty members are white.  
23 Additionally, Hispanics and African Americans  
24 constitute nine percent and 12.2 percent respectively  
25 of its full-time faculty members according to CUNY's



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Human... Office of Human Resource Management. In the report I cited, from fall 2015 to fall 2016, CUNY hired approximately 244 new faculty members. Of that number, 21 were African American or black and only one was hired in the category of area, ethnic, cultural, gender, and group studies. We must also be careful when utilizing CUNY data because at least in one case I discovered a glaring mistake. This mistake was on page seven in table A-3 of the Office of Human Resource Management Report. This table indicated that in the fall of 2016 Medgar Evers College had only 36 full time professors who were categorized as African Americans or black compared to 432 full time white professors. Obviously, these data points should be closely studied to make sure that they are not... that they are not misrepresentative. We as concerned individuals and important voices in our communities need to look more carefully at the hiring and recruitment practices of individual colleges and ask that CUNY Central provide guidelines and financial resources that will buttress strategic recruiting and hiring practices of qualified African Americans. These strategic and recruitment practices should be consistent with federal laws. Equally important, CUNY

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2 is not exempt from America's historical structures  
3 that perpetuate institutional racism. This is not to  
4 say that CUNY is a racist institution but I... because  
5 I do not believe that to be so. However, it's meant  
6 to recognize that black faculty face many barriers to  
7 getting full time positions, achieving tenure and  
8 promotions. As a former Chairperson of the Department  
9 of Social and Behavioral Sciences, I've met many  
10 talented black scholars who could have add value to  
11 the institution and the students we serve. However,  
12 many of them had to depart because I could not offer  
13 them full time positions. By way of a conclusion, the  
14 reality is that most institutions fund their  
15 strategic priorities. What is CUNY doing to  
16 adequately fund its diversity priorities? If we look  
17 at the resources CUNY is investing in transforming  
18 its faculty into a diverse group reflecting the  
19 historical and cultural traditions of people living  
20 in New York, I think we... I think it's safe to say  
21 that we have a long way to go. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I want to thank the  
23 panel for your testimony and you're... it was very  
24 enlightening to me that I had been making an  
25 assumption that was incorrect so Doctor Greene in

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2 your testimony you made a statement which helped me  
3 to come to a better understanding because it says  
4 five senior colleges offer baccalaureate black  
5 studies degrees and then later on in your testimony  
6 you said City College does not have a black studies  
7 department and it was very telling, wait a minute,  
8 programs and departments and degrees are all very  
9 distinct so if you would elaborate on that for me and  
10 I wish I had thought about that sooner because I  
11 would have made that more of an issue. So, there are  
12 five schools that have degrees, how many that have  
13 departments?

14 BRENDA GREENE: Right, so there was  
15 discussion about what you need to constitute a  
16 department...

17 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Right...

18 BRENDA GREENE: ...and this goes back... City  
19 College did have a department under the former...  
20 under... not the former... when, when Jeff... when Leonard  
21 Jeffries was Chair, right and after that they  
22 dismantled the department in essence. So, City  
23 College has a program and they... the program offers  
24 the bachelor's degrees in black studies and the  
25 faculty are in joint, joint... they, they're, they're

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2 serving in two, two areas so the, the former Cheryl  
3 Sterling was Chair of the black studies... black  
4 studies degree for the last five years, she has just  
5 resigned and she's now at another college and she,  
6 she indicated that three faculty left, there are only  
7 two faculty left in that program and they all have  
8 joint appointment. So, you have a situation where the  
9 colleges advocate for a department but if the  
10 administration does not support a department then  
11 they can offer a degree, I think New York City Tech  
12 was... is an example of that, they support the degree...  
13 no they don't even have the degree, they have a  
14 minor, City College... New York City Tech, I'm sorry  
15 has a concentration or a minor so it, it was  
16 enlightening to me also.

17 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay and, and I want  
18 to thank Doctor Browne from Hunter College, can you  
19 hit your button, that's a lot of feedback, turn it  
20 off when we're not talking, thank you. Thank you, its  
21 feedback when they stay on. And, and I want to thank  
22 you for bringing this matter to my attention, it was  
23 about a year or so ago that you saw me on the train  
24 and said oh, you know what there's an issue and  
25 that's the kind of input that we need, the kind of

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2 coat tailing, you know pulling on the coat tails to  
3 bring a matter up so that we can have a forum and  
4 look at what the issues are and see... not just look at  
5 the issues and have people come but what are we going  
6 to do about it, what kind of actions are we going to  
7 take and how are we going to make sure that we have  
8 some kind of longitudinal accountability so that  
9 people don't just come and say oh, we have this, this  
10 but what has been the impact and what has been the  
11 effect. Council Member Holden.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Doctor Anthony  
13 Browne, great testimony by the way and all, all the  
14 testimony that you gave... the panel gave. Just a  
15 question on mentoring which... retention of black  
16 faculty...

17 ANTHONY BROWNE: Uh-huh...

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Do you... does the  
19 administration at Hunter support the mentoring  
20 program in your department?

21 ANTHONY BROWNE: I would say it this,  
22 certainly it encourages it but what I think my  
23 colleagues and I are looking for is an institutional  
24 commitment to mentoring across the college so it's  
25 not just based on say individual faculty members,

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there's a structure in place that mandates junior faculty be mentored and given the requisite resources in order to at least promote their ability to do well through the educational ranks and so I think that's the key here to have something CUNY wide that's in place so faculty don't feel isolated in their respective departments and in part why I mention the issue of cluster hires because you're essentially creating a community when you bring in again a cluster hire and so you deal with support, you deal with... and you reduce questions of the validity of one's research, etcetera. One of the things that we know both anecdotally and from research is that often times research done by black faculty is, is marginalized by peers of the larger community and so that can create severe notions of isolation by faculty and alienation. A colleague of mine be forested a notion of me search meaning that often times black faculty who do research on race is, is viewed as, again them studying themselves so therefore it doesn't have merit or validity by, again by more senior colleagues and that is a major issue. So, trying to get at the heart of, of those kinds of

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2 cultural aspects that, again denigrate the work of,  
3 of these scholars is, is what I'm getting at.

4 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, thank you so  
5 much. I want to thank the panel for coming and  
6 sharing their testimony with us. Thank you. We're now  
7 going to call the next panel; Professor Blake from  
8 BMCOMMITTEE CLERK, Jerome Brown from BMCOMMITTEE  
9 CLERK and Doctor Valerie Small from New York City.  
10 We're facing a dilemma, this is a really popular  
11 topic and we've got three more panels and we are  
12 scheduled to be out of here by one so what we're  
13 going to do is ask each of the following panels to  
14 make their mark... remarks as concise as possible.

15 [off mic dialogue]

16 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, so again  
17 please in consideration of the ten more people that  
18 we're going to have come up in their various panels,  
19 please condense your remarks and make them as concise  
20 as possible and I'm going to ask Counsel to  
21 administer the oath.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK: Good afternoon, would  
23 you raise your right hands? Do you affirm to tell the  
24 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth and  
25 respond honestly to Council Member's questions?

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2 [panel affirms]

3 COMMITTEE CLERK: Please state your names  
4 for the record.

5 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes, next.

6 JEROME BROWN: My name is Jerome Brown.

7 VALERIE SMALL: Doctor Valerie Small.

8 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, thank you and  
9 your testimony please.

10 JAMES BLAKE: First of all, I'd like to  
11 thank the Councilwoman Inez Barron for giving us an  
12 opportunity to talk about such an important topic as  
13 black studies and the hiring of black faculty. I'm  
14 President of the Black Faculty Staff Association at  
15 the Borough of Manhattan Community College and I'm  
16 going to kind of like abbreviate my comments in  
17 respect, you know for the time and I'll just simply  
18 say that some things are the same and some things  
19 never change. I've been in this college for 48 years  
20 and I can remember back in 1972 when myself and  
21 Professor John Glenn and Professor Sonia Sanchez was  
22 marched through the campus in handcuffs fighting for  
23 black studies and we went to jail to get black  
24 studies and we were not just fighting for black  
25 studies. The fact of the matter is that the knowledge



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2 of self is so important for the growth of our  
3 children, the intellectual, emotional and  
4 psychological wellbeing that if we don't find a way  
5 in which to understand how important that is then our  
6 communities continue to suffer. I was born in New  
7 York, never had a black teacher from the time I was  
8 in kindergarten all the way through high school, I  
9 didn't even know there were such things as black  
10 teachers until I was able to find out about black  
11 colleges and I was so excited I had a scholarship to  
12 NYU and I went to the community and said I don't want  
13 to go to NYU, they said why, I said I want to go to  
14 North Carolina College, they said why do you want to  
15 go to the South, I said because I want to be around  
16 people who look like me and who have been, been  
17 achievers in life and I went there and it was the  
18 best thing I ever done. When I got out of Columbia in  
19 70 the student body was insisting on more black  
20 faculty members and more black studies and we fought,  
21 and we did achieve quite a bit, but it was with the  
22 help of the students and students being able to  
23 understand the importance of it. So, what I want to  
24 say is three things and it doesn't cover all of what  
25 I had to say but three things. One thing that came

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out was I tried to get data on the number of adjuncts that were moved to full time positions in CUNY... throughout CUNY, couldn't find the data anywhere. I was told by the institutional research person that we don't keep such data, so I would like the council to see if they could find a way to find out the programs that the president of one of the colleges talked about in terms of getting adjuncts into full time positions. What happened to that program, what was the data, did... is it still going on, that's very, very key? This is a very painful situation when you an adjunct and you're in a college for ten years or 15 years and, and a full-time position comes available and somebody who doesn't look like you, have been there maybe two years can get the position and you're bypassed, that's very painful, you know so... I, I would like to get that kind of data. I would also say, you know at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, you know we have to be very careful with definitions we make in progress, you know... you know we're making progress here at the science department at Borough of Manhattan Community College that had... that has something like, what 50 science department... they have 58 full time faculty

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2 and none of them are black and I met with the  
3 president yesterday, she don't know Jim, we just  
4 hired one, we're making progress, that's not  
5 progress, you know... you know, and you look at the  
6 modern language department, 27 faculty, none black.  
7 Computer, computer science, 16 faculty, none black;  
8 computer applications, again 16 faculty, none black;  
9 academic literacy and linguistic department 38 full  
10 time faculty, only three are black and this  
11 department recently in the last two years hired eight  
12 new faculty members, none of them were black, they're  
13 so comfortable, nobody's challenging them, you know  
14 and, and, and I can tell you that in 48 years I've  
15 been here before with the studies and the talk and  
16 how much we're interested in diversity and 48 years  
17 later I'm still here and we're start... talking about  
18 the same thing. Councilman Holden said something very  
19 important, he said where's the accountability, we got  
20 to have action, you know studying a problem doesn't  
21 mean you resolved the problem, knowing doesn't lead  
22 to doing, you know you have to do something about the  
23 problem after you study the problem. So, I can go on  
24 and on, but I just want to thank you again and say  
25 that when I leave I will be the only black male

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2 faculty counselor in the entire college and I wish  
3 that we can get this problem solved because I'd like  
4 to retire, bye.

5 JEROME BROWN: Hello again, my name is  
6 Jerome Brown, I am currently a student at BMCOMMITTEE  
7 CLERK where I will earn my associate degree in  
8 English literature this December 2018, I'm also  
9 published writer since attending BMCOMMITTEE CLERK  
10 where I've maintained a GPA of 3.7 or better. Last  
11 semester I was recognized on the dean's list, I've  
12 tutored several students in English and I have a  
13 mentee that I was paired with this semester. Lastly,  
14 I am the president of the student led club on campus,  
15 the Honor Society of Black Students. I grew up under  
16 foster care in Mount Vernon, New York where I  
17 attended Long, Longfellow Elementary School and Mount  
18 Vernon High School. By the time I entered the 11<sup>th</sup>  
19 grade, I had been shuffled through the system and my  
20 level of comprehension particularly in math was that  
21 of a fifth grader. Ultimately, I dropped out and  
22 managed to obtain a piece of paper called the GED  
23 which I define as a... an acronym for good education  
24 denied claiming I was proficient in all subjects  
25 required. I showed little interest of... I showed

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little interest... I showed little interest in school because little interest was paid to me. Most of the student population where I... where I... in, in the schools that I went to weren't black and all of my teachers as professor Black said, all of them were white straight through high school when I dropped out. When I entered BMCOMMITTEE CLERK at the age of 50 in 2016 it was the first time that I experienced what I refer to as reflections of myself, black men in particular who were professors. It was mandatory that I take remedial math, remedial eight math, a basic comprehension level of math; arithmetic, adding, subtracting, multiplication and division; I thought nothing of it because I... it had been 30 plus years since I had received the GED but what I witnessed in class were students, teens fresh out of high school in the same situation that I was in, not prepared for college, college. By this time, I had conditioned myself to believe that I could not comprehend math and feared taking it. I sought counseling at BMCOMMITTEE CLERK because I felt defeated shortly after my first semester began. In passing, I met a reflection, a black man, Professor Black who... he saw me, he saw me and...

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2 [applause]

3 JEROME BROWN: He acknowledged... he, he  
4 saw me, he actually saw me before I saw him. I, I was  
5 defiantly wearing a coyfee when Professor Blake said  
6 salam alaikum my brother, I didn't know how to  
7 respond, I, I... in my defiance I wasn't familiar with  
8 the language, I am not religious, I accept atheism.  
9 He extended his hand and proceeded to cordial... and  
10 proceeded cordially, you know you're a target these  
11 days wearing a coyfee he brought up, I acknowledge  
12 that's exactly why I'm wearing it. Before moving on  
13 he smiled and simply said, my office is down the hall  
14 pass by anytime, I'd like to hear from you. He saw  
15 again, I knew he understood, understood my mental  
16 state; confused, angry and fearful neatly hidden  
17 behind a smile. I had been exposed and my ignorance  
18 was not judged, he understood my complexities as a  
19 black man. Within days... within a day or so I was in  
20 his office slobbering over my fear of math. After I  
21 finished he gave me the gift of confidence I had been  
22 lacking, he said brother you're a smart man what you  
23 need is an intensive one on one tutoring. Professor  
24 Blake proceeded to escort me to a program on campus  
25 that he initiated, UMLA, which is an acronym for

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2 Urban Male Leadership Academy. I was immediately  
3 connected with the tutor's mentee. I breezed through  
4 remedial math, math 56 and ultimately statistics, I  
5 apologize for the oversight that should be  
6 statistics, back to back. While in remedial math I  
7 was presented with another reflection of myself, my  
8 professor, a black man, didn't just teach math, he  
9 was passionate, caring and made math enjoyable. I  
10 followed him through statistics. I share my story  
11 only to say there are far too many reflections of  
12 myself, black men in particular who are invisible  
13 role models at a teaching level. I reveal nothing new  
14 by saying black men in particular are least likely to  
15 succeed academically. Had I not met Professor Blake,  
16 I emphasize a black man within academia who saw me  
17 and embraced my complexities, there is a strong  
18 possibility that I'll... that I'll be just another  
19 statistic.

20 [applause]

21 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you, thank  
22 you.

23 VALERIE SMALL: Hi, I'm Doctor Valerie  
24 Small and unlike all those who proceeded me I do not...  
25 I... and I did not do any specific research because I

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2 am the research data today, it's me. I have not been  
3 structurally protected as maybe I should have been  
4 and that's why we need to have something in place as  
5 the former Professor had just said. In addition to  
6 that I don't want to use the word victim but I am a  
7 result of speaking out and I've been speaking out for  
8 about 30... 35 to 37 years because Doctor Lewin was my  
9 Professor at the Baruch College so it's very strange  
10 and, and I set there and I was crying when I heard  
11 you talking because this is what we was doing 37  
12 years ago and to say that I have graduated with a  
13 doctoral degree with three masters degrees and a  
14 bachelor's degree I am still not qualified to have a  
15 full time position. So, with that being said at the  
16 age of 55 as an African American woman I've been an  
17 adjunct for close to 17 years if not 17 years. I  
18 applied for several positions at two community  
19 colleges first starting with Queensborough Community  
20 College and I was on... they gave me, I believe like  
21 three to five years to complete degree and I did not  
22 complete it at that time but I was promised a  
23 lecturer position if I did not get it and then I  
24 could switch over, they denied that and I had to  
25 start a fight with ELC against them. When I started



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the fight the white board told me if you drop the charges against us we will give you a position and I said I refuse to do that so they said you'd rather lose a job as opposed... you'd rather stand up for principle as opposed to have a job, I said you're exactly right because there's other steps coming behind me. So, I'm here again today looking at the same situation at Borough of Manhattan Community College again, they too, I went up for a position just a subline had a, a conversation with the Chairperson over a year about a subline, are there any available and she told me no. The same semester she hired three white men who do not have doctoral degrees and I don't even know if they had master's degrees and when I voiced my concern I was totally dismissed. I don't know if it's anger, disappointment, I'm frustrated but something has to be done. I am even suffering retaliation to this point, I almost lost my home behind this, with Queensborough Community College. I lost so many things because financially I was in stress and distress and these individuals are still in these positions interviewing people that do not look like me and do not have my qualifications and they are

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2 getting the jobs. I have had it, we have got to do  
3 something. I told a couple of colleagues just today,  
4 I have nothing to lose at this point. So, they have  
5 my name, they know who I am, is nothing else  
6 Chairperson that they can actually do to me because  
7 they have done already... everything already. I'm in...  
8 my case right now with BMCOMMITTEE CLERK is at EEOC  
9 again. So, with that being said I just want to say  
10 that, yes, I am a statistic and what they are  
11 actually saying is true because I'm sitting here, I  
12 am a person that has experienced it. I don't know  
13 what else to do. They keep changing the game plans  
14 every time we achieve. Thank you.

15 [applause]

16 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. I, I have  
17 lots of comments but in the interest of time I will  
18 direct them to you personally afterwards, so I do  
19 want to thank you and I want to call the next panel.  
20 And the next panel is John Aderounmu and Hercules  
21 Reid from CUNY USS, Liam Giordano from Baruch College  
22 USS and... oh, it's the same... just... okay. Thank you,  
23 I'm going to ask Counsel to administer the oath and  
24 if you could please summarize, I have a clock please,  
25 two minutes or less, we've got about... [cross-talk]

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK: Okay, please raise  
3 your... [cross-talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...a dozen more  
5 people... [cross-talk]

6 COMMITTEE CLERK: ...right hands, do you  
7 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing  
8 but the truth in your testimony before this committee  
9 and to respond honestly to Council Member's  
10 questions?

11 HERCULES REID: Yes...

12 JOHN ADEROUNMU: Yes.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

14 HERCULES REID: Good afternoon, I'm  
15 coming to you today as an alumnus from New York City  
16 College of Technology where I have the privilege to  
17 study architectural technology. I currently serve as  
18 the Legislative Director for USS and here's my story.  
19 I was a transfer student to CUNY from a historically  
20 black college, Delaware State University where I was  
21 in a space where education, empowerment and culture  
22 were in the DNA. Being able to be educated, mentored  
23 and supported by someone and people who looked like  
24 me gave me a level of support I took for granted.  
25 Seeing successful... seeing successful faculty and

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2 administration... and, and administrators of color gave  
3 me hope and pride. Most importantly, the only time I  
4 learned about history... my history was not just an  
5 elective or the responsibility of the African  
6 American department. Transferring to CUNY was  
7 different. CUNY boasts to be the largest urban  
8 university, but they lack strongly when it comes to  
9 diversity. Student population is high in diversity,  
10 but faculty tells a different story. During my time  
11 at City Tech I can use one hand to count how many  
12 faculties let alone adjuncts I encountered as a  
13 student in my own department. I was not lucky enough  
14 to be enrolled in their classes, but I knew they  
15 existed. I'm extremely grateful for my education  
16 nonetheless, we are here about the elephant in the  
17 room. There was a CUNY task force that was assembled,  
18 and I would just like to read a quick excerpt from  
19 some of the statistics that we found. Faculty has  
20 gone up continuously over the years, I believe from  
21 2007 to 2016 it has gone up by 17.3 percent.  
22 Undergraduate numbers have went from 203,000 to  
23 243,000, a 19.6 percent increase but we have to note  
24 that as far as diversity approximately two thirds of  
25 the faculty continue to lack ethnic and racial

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2 diversity. 7,698 full time faculty members are white  
3 with only 12 percent being black, 8.9 Hispanic. At  
4 the end of the day students need a city and... need...  
5 the city and the state to secure and commit to  
6 necessary funding to increase salaries and the number  
7 of full-time faculty. I believe that it's also  
8 because of the lack of funding for faculty that black  
9 and brown faculty are also going to other places  
10 instead of coming to CUNY to apply. Faculty need  
11 increased pay and they need to increase the number of  
12 full-time faculty teaching at CUNY. My report says a  
13 whole lot more, my testimony so I'll let you read  
14 that, and I'll let them continue.

15 JOHN ADEROUNMU: Greetings Chairperson

16 Barron, members of the New York City Higher Education  
17 Committee and distinguished guests. My name is John  
18 Aderounmu, I'm the Chairperson of the University  
19 Student Senate at CUNY, I'm also a member of the  
20 Board of Trustee at CUNY. I, I added in my statement  
21 to include some other information and I was going to  
22 skip over some of the... This is off the script. So,  
23 black students of some of the... of the senior colleges  
24 including Hunter Colleges have reduced... have reduced  
25 in the... in the... in the past years as a result, result

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2 of the special scholarships provided by high schools,  
3 of all high schools around Hunter College. So, these  
4 new students don't take classes such as African  
5 American classes and that has justifiably driven up  
6 the departments. We can fix this by desegregating the  
7 high school's funding programs such as BMI in the  
8 same manner as those programs have been given  
9 funding. Such disproportionately to other races such  
10 as the Macaulay College. About two years ago I  
11 brought this issue up to the... of student diversity in  
12 the colleges with the current Interim Chancellor at  
13 an USS dinner. The absolute discovery in her face and  
14 the manner in which she avoided me until she could no  
15 longer do so still very plain on my... I know and I'm  
16 aware that students are very capable, capable of  
17 forcing the issue at hand. The current... at CUNY and I  
18 as well as the students... as the students who ask  
19 these questions, but we also know that we have to do  
20 more than... more than just ask questions. In my time  
21 at CUNY I've had two black professors at BMCOMMITTEE  
22 CLERK, one a... one a math professor that has been  
23 around for two decades and secured a tenure long  
24 before... long before changes like this were, were  
25 being... happening and one at, at, at Hunter College

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2 which was from the African American history  
3 department. I will now skip to the final paragraph of  
4 my... not the final paragraph, final paragraph of my  
5 speech. Adjuncts are the underpaid, overworked,  
6 undervalued members of the institution at CUNY. They  
7 are forced to take in burdens of advancing the  
8 classes. While some community colleges have a notable  
9 amount of, of adjuncts, the senior colleges recruit  
10 graduate students at a disproportionate rate to  
11 community colleges in my experience. These of  
12 adjuncts in this manner leaves it impossible for some  
13 of the other non-student adjuncts that might be able...  
14 that might be blacks to make progress in those senior  
15 colleges in attempt of tenure and being a full-  
16 fledged member of the faculty, you combine that with  
17 the inadequate funding from the state for decades to  
18 the senior colleges you find out that CUNY has not  
19 made any changes in increasing its faculty as a whole  
20 not to even talk of the black, black professors. And  
21 as a whole to match with this increase in population  
22 give, given the fact that we're now having rising  
23 technology and the demand of online classrooms, I  
24 suspect this is just going to get worse. In respect  
25 to black faculty in particular the very best we owe

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2 in our approach for other universities and colleges  
3 around the country in a bid to improve their numbers  
4 as they get offered better salaries and conditions.

5 To address the issue at CUNY we will have to  
6 adequately fund... CUNY would have... adequately be  
7 funded... will have to be adequately funded by the  
8 state in order to remove it from the regression it  
9 currently faces. We will need to reduce its reliance,  
10 reliance on adjuncts and student adjuncts and hire  
11 more black faculty from the numerous graduate,  
12 graduates as its reduced. It will need to be the  
13 greatest urban university it claims to be in our  
14 stations... in our subway stations and at local points  
15 through online classes as a supposed future, they  
16 will need to be complimented but not replaced. It is  
17 proven that students do better when they have some,  
18 some, someone teaching them that looks like them and  
19 need to understand the composition of unique and this  
20 is self-explanatory. Thank you for listening and  
21 holding this hearing on this important matter, I hope  
22 that we have continuous conversations in this matter  
23 here at the city council and other places as well.

24 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you.  
25



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2 LIAM GIORDANO: Good morning Chairwoman

3 Barron. My name is Liam Giordano and I'm one of two...

4 okay, thank you. Is, is it working? Okay, I'm one of

5 two elected Senators that's a Delegate to the

6 University Student Senate from Baruch College. First

7 and foremost, I want to thank Doctor Lewin as being

8 represented from our college because quite frankly

9 our faculty doesn't seem too interested in diversity

10 on campus, so I'd like to begin my remarks. So,

11 officially my role includes representing all 500,000

12 plus students within the CUNY system just like John

13 the Chairperson of, of our Senate does as well. But

14 I'd like to kind of withhold my remarks and, and

15 solely represent Baruch College today. So, this

16 includes about 15,238 matriculated undergraduate

17 students in over 2,500 matriculated graduate

18 students. I would like to address the issue directly.

19 As a student who takes liberal arts courses and

20 social science courses exclusively and who is a

21 senior completing the last year of a bachelor's

22 degree, I can count on one hand the number of

23 ethnically diverse professors that I've had and

24 within that number there are zero black professors.

25 I'm testifying here today that to the best of my

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knowledge, this is an experience shared by a substantial number of my peers. I find this incredibly disappointing and unrepresentative of our diverse city and its pool of qualified, educated individuals looking to teach for our city university. While on the topic of unrepresentative samples of diversity, I would like to discuss the curriculum at my college as well. This semester, undergraduate students at my college have the opportunity to enroll in any of ten listed courses offered under the subject black studies. Of these ten courses, there were 15 slots available. This means some classes were offered at more than one time. Of these 15 slots, six were just the basic introductory course into black studies that fulfills a CUNY core requirement that students must take. Teaching the 15 slots are only eight professors, four of whom teach only one course on the subject. Of these ten courses, six are combined section classes that share enrollment with another department. Five of these six are shared with the Latino studies department, which after discounting the aforementioned courses and professors offers only two new professors. This semester, undergraduate students at my college have the

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2 opportunity to enroll in any variation of more than  
3 four dozen business related courses that were taught  
4 by more than three dozen instructors. In my  
5 calculation, I only added the postings of economics,  
6 finance and business administration subjects' courses  
7 and professors, let alone the many other business-  
8 related subjects like accounting, mathematics and  
9 many others offered at Baruch. Baruch College offers  
10 no graduate level course, courses pertaining to any  
11 black studies or Latino studies in any circumstance  
12 at all. While I understand my testimony can quickly  
13 be perceived as irrelevant as Baruch College is the  
14 staple of the city university system and generates  
15 rankings and reputations to underwrite that, I would  
16 like to clarify my position. The City University of  
17 New York should uphold the principles that this city  
18 embodies and should be indicative of the values we  
19 hold ourselves to as New Yorkers. This should be  
20 translated into not only our student body because we  
21 know it already is but into the very lifeline of our  
22 education system, into our educators. We live in very  
23 trying times, where diversity and inclusion are  
24 threatened quite regularly, and it is my  
25 recommendation that we offer students a well-rounded

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2 education to combat that growing threat. I recommend  
3 a more revamped hiring system that is more inclusive  
4 than ever before to offer our university students the  
5 just education that they deserve. Thank you for your  
6 time.

7 [applause]

8 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. As I said  
9 previously I do have comments but in the interest of  
10 time I'll reserve them and call the last panel.  
11 Kasson Colon-Mangin, Ras Omeil Morgan, Hanan Hameen,  
12 Shawn Best and Naajidah Correll, if those persons are  
13 here they would come forward and, and we're just  
14 going to ask that you just get right into your  
15 testimony. And as soon as you're seated we can begin,  
16 we're going to dispense with the testimony and if you  
17 could prepare yourselves... no, we won't do the  
18 testimony, if you could prepare yourselves to  
19 condense your remarks to two minutes that would be  
20 very helpful. You may begin.

21 [off mic dialogue]

22 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: You just begin with  
23 your testimony.

24 KASSON COLON-MANGIN: Sure.  
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Give us your name  
3 and your comments.

4 KASSON COLON-MANGIN: My name is Kasson  
5 Colon-Mangin, I'm a student at City College, I say  
6 I'm a black studies major but I guess I'm actually a  
7 Jewish Puerto Rican and Black studies with a  
8 concentration in black studies but I'm actually going  
9 to take a, a folktale from the curriculum that I'm  
10 doing this semester from Zora Neal Hurston and it's  
11 kind of contradictory to what is being taught through  
12 the departments. And it's called How to Write a  
13 Letter. I know another man with a daughter. The man  
14 sent his daughter off to school for seven years then  
15 she come home all finished up. So, he said to her,  
16 daughter get your things, write me a letter to my  
17 brother, so she did. He says, head it up and she done  
18 so. Now tell him, dear brother our child is done come  
19 home from school and all finished up and we are very  
20 proud of her. Then asked the girl, is you got... is, is  
21 you got that, she told him yeah. now tell him some  
22 more, our mule is dead, but I got another mule and  
23 when I say clucking... the clucking sound like, like  
24 African language, the clucking sound with his... with  
25 his tongue and teeth he moved from the word, is you

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2 got that he said to the girl, no, no sir she told  
3 him. He waited a while and asked her again, you got  
4 that down, I don't got that, you mean to tell me you  
5 went to school for seven years you can't spell  
6 clucking sound, why I could spell that myself and I  
7 ain't been to school a day in my life, well just say  
8 clucking sound, he'll know exactly what you mean but  
9 for, for me that, that really shows that we're going  
10 to, to college and it's not entirely culturally  
11 competent and we're relieving... we're, we're not  
12 rooted in our cultural systems and beliefs and I, I  
13 think that we should have more faculty that are  
14 focusing on the linguistics of the African diaspora  
15 coming into CUNY. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. You may  
17 begin, give us your name please.

18 RAS OMEIL MORGAN: Yes, blessed love. I  
19 am Ras Omeil Morgan and thank you honorable... [cross-  
20 talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Barron...

22 RAS OMEIL MORGAN: ...Barron, yes. I'm an  
23 alumni at CUNY Medgar Evers College, I graduated in  
24 June with a bachelor in Public Administration  
25 focusing on criminal and justice, our injustice and

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2 Medgar Evers is very important to us because of the  
3 seal of Medgar; it has freedom, justice, knowledge  
4 and peace, that is the seal that we want to promote  
5 and Medgar Evers does not have any Africana studies,  
6 no black studies at Medgar Evers, how is that?

7 Alright, the police was called on me at Medgar Evers  
8 College and right now because of that I have CUNY  
9 within the Eastern Federal district court as a pro se  
10 litigant. I wish to go to law school because I want  
11 to champion the... that has been instilled in me at  
12 Medgar Evers from all of these great professors and  
13 administrators at Medgar Evers, I saw two of them  
14 earlier; Doctor Greene who I talk, and the reality of  
15 enslavement and slavery not being even taught at  
16 Medgar Evers College, its troubling. The police was  
17 called on me, an African male at Medgar because I was  
18 promoting my first amendment right to distribute  
19 books speaking about enslavement in America and it's  
20 a blessing because nothing is a curse, I turn it into  
21 a yearly commemoration of the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment on  
22 December 6<sup>th</sup> we all have to celebrate the 13<sup>th</sup>  
23 amendment because it ended slavery except as a  
24 punishment for a crime we as the party shall have  
25 been dually convicted. So, I am using that which has

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2 done to me, we have turned the bad into good and  
3 Medgar work... we need CUNY to put more money into  
4 Medgar because to be the only predominately black  
5 institution in CUNY and don't have Africana studies  
6 there is a problem and because of that problem we are  
7 here to solve them so that honorable... the empress  
8 Barron for her effort because I cannot call her by  
9 City Council because next years 400 year... just five  
10 seconds, 400 years since 1619, we all should be  
11 commemorating it, HR 1242, pass, signed into law by  
12 this current president, beat him up for that and to  
13 know that the Department of Interior has not done  
14 anything to execute on this promise... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay... [cross-talk]

16 RAS OMEIL MORGAN: ...for, for us so again  
17 I just thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you so much,  
19 next panelist.

20 NAAJIDAH CORRELL: Hi...

21 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Give us your name.

22 NAAJIDAH CORRELL: Hi, my name is  
23 Naajidah Correll, I'm from City College, I'm a black  
24 studies major where I'm a Kaye scholar, Mellon May  
25 scholar, Colin Powell Fellow or was a Colin Powell



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2 Fellow and I'm also in the arts Program. So,  
3 according to a study by the office institute of  
4 research in 2017, City College's total enrollment  
5 rate for undergraduate black students was 18.9  
6 percent a two percent drop from 2015. According to  
7 the same study only 12 percent of full-time faculty  
8 throughout the entire college are African American at  
9 City College, of the 12 percent only two make up the  
10 black studies program. This means that a majority of  
11 students in the black major... in the black studies  
12 major are being taught by adjunct professors who may  
13 or may not stay and that disqualifies us from  
14 academic opportunities on campus that require us to  
15 submit two to three letters of recommendations from  
16 tenured professors of which we have a substantial  
17 relationship with. I wasn't able to apply to a  
18 Stanford program because of this. Beyond the  
19 immediate exclusion from certain academic  
20 opportunities that is worth mentioning that not only  
21 the population of black students... and the retention  
22 rate has declined. In a study done by John Hopkins  
23 University researchers have found by just having one  
24 black teacher, black students are more likely to  
25 graduate, and another study done by another College,

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the fact that black students... the fact that black students fare better at universities when they see professors whom with they can identify was affirmed. In my own personal experiences, a major motivating factor of my success as a young scholar at this institution has been due to African American faculty at City College, it wasn't the fellowships that target minority students but rarely if ever involve black faculty. And I also think that African American studies should not just be a pit stop within larger departments because that's a form of minimization which is also a form of Irishea, it should be its own department with a lounge of students which we currently do not have, it should have a director which we currently do not have, it should pay the people who uphold the program with wages which it currently does not do. The fact that the program is merely a program and not a department, the fact that its understaffed and underpaid, the fact that the office is the size of a closet shows me as a black student at City College that we don't matter, it shows that... it shows me that black faculty doesn't matter and I feel that if diversity in, in the student body really matters and its more than just an

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2 image of inclusion we seek to uphold then so does  
3 African American faculty and African American  
4 students and how can we call ourselves the minority  
5 serving institution when we're in white hiring  
6 institution. Thank you.

7 HANAN HAMEEN: Greetings. I would just  
8 like to say before I... [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Give us your name  
10 please for the record.

11 HANAN HAMEEN: I am Hanan Hameen but  
12 before I start I would just like to request if I can  
13 just have the time so I can read my entire document,  
14 I came a very long way, I'm dealing with disability,  
15 I'm sitting here with these lights, I'm in extreme  
16 pain dealing with Lupus and I have my... and I would  
17 like to just read my entire presentation, it won't be  
18 very long.

19 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay.

20 HANAN HAMEEN: So, thank you. Greetings,  
21 I am Hanan Hameen, Master of Science and Education  
22 and Leadership with an advanced certificate in school  
23 building leadership from Baruch College, a proud  
24 product of the public education system of New York  
25 City including Pre-K through 12, CUNY and SUNY. Since

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1981, starting at age two at the City College Child Development Center of New York, I attended eight public schools, three CUNY, and one SUNY institution and earned two certifications, a dual bachelor's degree, two master's degrees and currently I'm in pursuit of a doctorate of education in curriculum, instruction and assessment. And as a... as a gifted and talented student, my family's search for an intellectually challenging school with culturally responsive educators was extensive, difficult to navigate and full of obstacles. As a doctoral student currently doing research in education to combat this cultural disconnect in our public-school system, I see the gaps in literature and practice that make negative educational experiences possible. As an educator with training and, and credentials to be a district leader in principal, I use the arts as a weapon of social justice to train educators, administrators and students through my teaching methodology and curriculum to eliminate the occurrences that I experienced during my educational journey. I make this point to say that this void starts somewhere... excuse me and carries over into any classroom. It is... it is imperative that instructors

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2 including those in higher education know their  
3 students, know their culture, history and have a  
4 genuine respect for each child's right to learn and  
5 be who they are. Strongly put, the white experience  
6 is not the black experience. Many of my college  
7 professor associates constantly commiserate about the  
8 poor condition of their students and how much time  
9 they have to spend reteaching and in many instances  
10 teaching their students the basics before they can  
11 even start to teach their own subject at a higher  
12 level. They take the position that is... it is the  
13 fault of the students and their inadequate teachers  
14 in lower grades. They rarely question the whys. I do  
15 not think they ever take into consideration that many  
16 of their colleagues were lower grade teachers first  
17 such as the teacher I had the misfortune of being  
18 subjected to. If the foundation is not laid correctly  
19 the institution crumbles from within. The taxing  
20 educational journey I experienced included being  
21 bussed from my predominately African American  
22 neighborhood to schools in predominately Italian  
23 American, Hispanic and African American, diverse  
24 European American and Caribbean American  
25 neighborhoods. Armed with a strong sense of self from

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my home environment, each school I attended smacked me with indifference, lack, bullying, miseducation, microaggressions, and institutionalized racism in some way. The negative experiences I was subjected to was from teachers, students and administrative staff. The epitome of that real... of that reality came to light during my high school years, at the CUNY City College of New York campus high school, A. Philip Randolph, when a well-respected English teacher did everything she could to demean, degrade and destroy the very existence of every child in her classroom. By attacking other cultures and bemoaning the fact that no other people on the planet suffered more than hers, her people the Irish and they... that they were the forgotten people and any claims to the contrary were false. Not able to sit through the almost daily attacks when disagreement, she placed me in the hallway more than once to the point where my parents, because of not assistance its insensitive administration, had to remove me from the school and place me in a specialized alternative, innovative, science school in Brooklyn, the Science Skills Center High School for Creative Arts and Technology. With a founding principal and staff who were culturally

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similar, relevant and responsive I was able to flourish as a student and individual. This growth led me to create programs at the school while a student including the Jow Ile Bailar Dance Company featured in the PBS Emmy nominated documentary PS Dance and begin creating a business plan to open my own school. Revitalized with a love for education upon graduation from high school, I entered the CUNY system encouraged and ready to learn. Throughout this process of seeking an educational and culturally safe place to learn, my exposures to educators and professors who shared the same cultural background as me or displayed respect for my culture was slim to none. On the CUNY level, I did not have any professors of color with melanin, with SUNY, I only had two. As a lover of learning, in spite of being raised by parents who are conscientious educators, this lack of diversity within CUNY faculty, especially in the STEM fields, was harmful to my development and detrimental to my educational career causing me to drop out of college after two years. My yearning for and nature of being a lifelong learner sent me in a desperate search for culturally appropriate mentors who, who when found in the

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2 cultural arts community, later guided me back to  
3 higher education with a purpose, after four years  
4 since leaving school. For these reasons, it is vital  
5 that there is an increased presence of black  
6 professors in CUNY and SUNY and hiring should  
7 increase for this demographic. In conclusion, we must  
8 question the reason why there is a lack of black  
9 faculty so that the status quo of miseducation and  
10 misrepresentation can cease to continue. That is my  
11 purpose and response to the question, what are your  
12 answers? Thank you and thank you for the time.

13 [applause]

14 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. And last  
15 but not least.

16 SHAWN BEST: Good afternoon... [cross-talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Good afternoon...

18 [cross-talk]

19 SHAWN BEST: ...my name is Shawn Best, the  
20 Interim University Director for the CUNY Black Male  
21 Initiative. Thank you for having us Chair Barron and  
22 also all members and friends. So, I've had a lot of  
23 conversations with many of you about this issue  
24 before I've even come here today so I know a lot of  
25 the issues have been addressed and have been already



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2 brought up so I'm not going to reiterate a lot of  
3 those issues, but I will talk about some solutions  
4 that CUNY BMI is doing. Number one, we have started a  
5 doctoral network three years ago. When I came on  
6 board as an associate director for CUNY BMI  
7 underneath their director of PhD, Doctor Jumane  
8 Wright who at the time was pursuing his doctorate at  
9 the point, we realized that we had to start creating  
10 a pipeline for opportunities for young black and  
11 Latino faculty of men and, and staff to become  
12 faculty down the road so we started having a forum so  
13 we'd have a network so we can have a chance for  
14 people to interact with people who already perceived  
15 there and received their PhDs and their tertiary  
16 degrees to figure out what the road took to get to  
17 that point and then also... by... therefor and creating a  
18 network of people who were able to connect with each  
19 other and provide support throughout CUNY across  
20 different college campuses. Also, we have the CUNY  
21 BMI conference that we do every year. As many of you  
22 know it's happening at City Tech next Friday, I left  
23 some... I'm going to leave some flyers here for  
24 everyone to be able to take one and view it at the  
25 time you're available, it's a free conference and

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we're featuring amazing PhDs and faculty and speakers from across the country and also highlighting the work that our students are doing as well. One of the things we also started is also promoting access and opportunity for some of our young people through intercollegiate counsel that we've now supported Kasson Colon-Mangin who's sitting here on the panel is now our current president for that counsel and we've created across campus structure for all students across every BMI project, all 31 projects to get together and talk about issues that are affecting us in our community like issues of black faculty being hired and retained in our institution and try to find out some practical solutions on how to do that but also just getting the word out so we get our students more engaged and active because their voices matter and having more students collected in those ideas makes a difference for us. Also, you'll see in the testimony some of the results of what our BMI projects have done, our students are outperforming CUNY generally in GPA, in credit accumulation and retention rates. CUNY needs to put more money behind BMI because it's working, it's a model that we've done along with site visits to create a best practice

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2 documented that has gone across to 2,500 recipients  
3 of universities across the country. We've replicated  
4 BMI in over 17 colleges and university systems across  
5 the country and now COSA generally student affairs  
6 that's at CUNY is replicating what BMI has done, is  
7 now doing site visits and the quality control and  
8 best practices across their institutions so we are  
9 always leading the way, we get very little  
10 recognition for it but we, we don't need the praise  
11 and credit we just want to see good work being done  
12 and replicated and also just make sure that everyone  
13 knows that we're trying to create a pipeline in our  
14 own little way to make sure that there are faculty  
15 that are getting promoted and getting recognized in  
16 the institutions. So, thank you for your time.

17 [applause]

18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. I do want  
19 to apologize for the last panel to having you to  
20 consolidate your remarks but I do appreciate all that  
21 you've said and particularly want to thank you, I  
22 know that you had spoken to my staff earlier about  
23 getting accommodations because of your special needs  
24 and we do appreciate your coming and I have to say  
25 that people can't talk about BMI without me

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2 acknowledging the fact that my husband, my  
3 predecessor, Charles Barron, that's right, was the  
4 one that was so much in the forefront in spearheading  
5 that BMI project and its been around since... what is  
6 it 12 years now...

7 SHAWN BEST: 13, 13 years now.

8 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: 13 years now, so we  
9 certainly want to acknowledge his contributions. I  
10 want to thank all of you for coming and we have to  
11 think of how we can follow up, get that forum and  
12 platform for how we come together, have a  
13 concentration of all of our issues and come up with a  
14 solution and I invite you all to be at that  
15 conference next Friday. Thank you so much and this  
16 hearing is adjourned.

17 [applause]

18 [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date

October 21, 2018