

**Testimony of Senior Vice Chancellor Matthew Sapienza
The City University of New York
New York City Council Higher Education Committee Hearing:
Fiscal Year 2020 Preliminary Budget
March 7, 2019**

Good morning, Chairperson Barron and members of the Higher Education Committee. I am Matthew Sapienza, CUNY's senior vice chancellor and chief financial officer. I am joined by Judy Bergtraum, senior vice chancellor for facilities planning, construction and management. We are also joined by several of our colleagues from the University who will assist in responding to questions and concerns from the Committee.

We appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2020 Preliminary Budget and its effect on The City University of New York. Chairperson Barron, and members of the committee, we very much appreciate your strong and continuing advocacy for our students.

We come here today at a time of many positive developments at CUNY. Applications and new freshman enrollments continue to rise to record levels. More students come to CUNY college-ready because of pioneering pre-matriculation programs like CUNY Start. Fewer students are starting CUNY needing remedial courses, and those who do are moving to credit-bearing courses more quickly. As a result of our campus academic momentum campaigns, students across the University are making faster progress to graduation. For the first time with the fall 2016 cohort, more than 50% of bachelor's students earned 30 credits in their first year, putting them on track to finish in four years. A record number of degrees – almost 54,000 – were granted across CUNY in the 2017-2018 school year. Our 6-year baccalaureate graduation rate has grown by nearly 25% over the last decade, and our 3-year associate graduation rate has more than doubled. Undergraduate degrees awarded to Black and Latino students have increased by over 70% during that same period. We are very pleased with results like these but are also incredibly and rightfully proud that CUNY is arguably the most diverse university in the nation, if not the world.

CUNY continues to be the best value in U.S. higher education. CUNY costs a fraction of what students pay at private institutions, and it beats most public universities as well. A report issued last fall by the Rockefeller Institute of Government underscores this point: Rockefeller found that 79% of all undergraduates from CUNY's two-year and four-year schools graduated debt-free in 2017, a percentage that has remained stable since 2010. As a result of the generous financial aid programs, including the Tuition Assistance Program, Excelsior Scholarships, and City Council Vallone Scholarships, along with the Federal Pell Grant program and federal tuition tax-credits, about two-thirds of CUNY students attend tuition-free. Only about 11% of our full-time undergraduate students paid full tuition in the last academic year. All told, in the 2018 aid year there were nearly 260,000 awards in federal and state education aid to CUNY students, totaling over \$1 billion.

All of this positive data accentuates the University's vital role as an engine of economic and social mobility in New York. Our Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Request is predicated on the idea that for the City and State of New York to thrive and lead in these times, CUNY must continue to play a key role in producing a highly educated workforce for the most globally competitive region of the nation.

Now let me speak to the City's Preliminary Budget. We are pleased that the City's financial plan provides stability for our community colleges through the funding of mandatory costs related to fringe benefits, building rentals, and salary increases resulting from the University's recent collective bargaining agreement with District Council 37. Funding from prior plans will enable us to continue programs targeted at college readiness, such as Algebra for All, CUNY Math Start, and 12th Grade Proficiency.

We are extremely grateful to the City Council, particularly the Higher Education Committee, for securing resources in this year's budget for the Vallone Merit Scholarships. We will ask for your advocacy again, as funding for this critical student support program was not included in the FY19 Preliminary Budget. This initiative provides financial aid to students who graduated with an 80 average from New York City high schools and who maintained a B average at the University. These merit-based awards are available to

deserving students at both the senior colleges and community colleges and are a significant contribution to our efforts to speed time to degree. They demonstrate to our students, in a tangible way, that their city makes it possible to pursue an excellent postsecondary education right here at home. We look forward to working with you in ensuring that these financial aid awards are protected.

We also need your help in restoring \$2 million that was provided for remediation in the current fiscal year. CUNY has developed a plan to better tailor remedial instruction to the needs of its students and to accelerate their degree progress. Advisors strongly encourage students who have the greatest need—those who place into arithmetic and those who need remedial instruction in all three skill areas—reading, writing and mathematics—to enroll in CUNY Start or Math Start, CUNY's effective programs that are helping students achieve proficiency. All of these interventions are low- or no-cost for the student. Our plan is to eliminate traditional course-based remedial instruction altogether within five years.

Additional needs to support CUNY's ongoing efforts to increase completion rates are highlighted in our FY2020 budget request. We are seeking City investment in several significant endeavors. The first is related to support for associate degree programs at our comprehensive colleges. The amount provided for these programs has remained constant at \$32.3 million since 1995. Simply applying the Higher Education Price Index over that time period would result in an additional \$32.8 million in annual, recurring support.

Our first category of strategic investments will expand upon proven approaches that advance student academic success and degree completion. We propose to expand our signature Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) student success program, its new four-year counterpart, Accelerate, Complete and Engage (ACE) and support other academic momentum initiatives that together are accelerating progress to completion, raising graduation rates and, crucially, closing racial achievement gaps. Expanding and supporting the growth of a diverse body of full-time faculty is also essential to all academic success initiatives.

Second, we need to make sure that students do not become sidetracked in their academic pursuits by issues like food and housing insecurity, unmet mental and physical health needs, the demands of childcare and other basic needs. We propose to increase availability of campus childcare, as many of our 16 centers have waiting lists, and to address student food insecurity and homelessness, both unfortunate trends in our student body. More specifically, almost 80 percent of CUNY's first-time freshmen come from the New York City public schools, where they are eligible to receive breakfast and lunch at no cost. Upon entering CUNY, students must pay in-full for their meals. While the University has made a commitment to maintain food pantries and provide food vouchers at the colleges, there is much more to be done. With additional funding, we would develop a program to provide swipe cards to be used at University cafeterias throughout the year.

Third, we propose to invest in CUNY Works, a set of integrated, bold new steps to ensure our students are well-positioned to thrive in today's changing world of work. We will scale up CUNY's new workforce center to engage employers across 10 high-growth sectors and translate their needs into career exploration and development, hard and soft skills training, and job placement for our students. Similarly, we plan to grow the availability of paid internships and expand experiential and service learning for our students.

Let me turn now to the State Budget. CUNY's request to the State includes a community college base aid funding increase of \$250 per student full-time equivalent (FTE). This increase in State funding, along with continued City support, would adequately support community college operations and enable the University to freeze community college tuition rates for a fourth straight year. In addition, we are hopeful that the Senate and Assembly will restore funding for ASAP and childcare centers.

Chairperson Barron and members of the committee, please be assured that the University deeply appreciates your continued commitment to a high-quality CUNY education, which is the vehicle that so many New Yorkers rely on for the path of upward mobility. I would now like to ask Judy Bergtraum, Senior Vice Chancellor of Facilities Planning, Construction and Management, to talk about CUNY's capital budget.

Fiscal Year 2020 Preliminary Budget Hearing Final Capital

Testimony of The City University of New York

New York City Council Finance and Higher Education Committees

Fiscal Year 2020 Preliminary Budget Hearing

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Good Morning Chairperson Barron, and committee members, I am Judy Bergtraum, Senior Vice Chancellor of Facilities Planning, Construction and Management at CUNY. It is a pleasure to be here today and I am happy to have this opportunity to discuss with you our capital budget.

The City Council has been an outstanding partner to CUNY, and especially to our community colleges, by providing support for critical maintenance work and major new buildings. In recent years, your support has been instrumental in helping CUNY to complete pool restorations at BMCC and Bronx Community Colleges; major expansion of libraries at Medgar Evers and LaGuardia Community College; creation of a new dining facility at Queensborough Community College; renovation of the 500 Grand Concourse Building 4th floor at Hostos Community College, and installation of the largest photovoltaic array in Manhattan on BMCC's Chambers Street building. All these projects added or upgraded space and have enriched those campuses with modern, well-designed facilities that inspire students.

Fiscal Year 2020 Preliminary Budget Hearing Final Capital

In recent years, the Council has provided hundreds of millions of dollars to CUNY that funded hundreds of projects, in particular at the community colleges where the need is greatest. Because of your generous support of critical maintenance funding, CUNY has been able to address some of the most challenging critical maintenance issues at these campuses. In particular your allocation of lump-sum funds that allow CUNY to add to projects that are in process has helped CUNY move several important critical maintenance projects along. Last year the council provided CUNY \$10 million which CUNY has requested the state match that would then make it \$20 million. As you know from our previous discussions, achieving a state of good repair within the system is CUNY's priority.

One of the largest ongoing critical maintenance projects is the replacement of façade of LaGuardia Community College's Center 3 Building. This enormous building is 100 years old and its façade must be replaced if the building is to be preserved. I am happy to report that we expect to complete construction of this \$125 million project by the end of this year. I hope you will all take pride in realization of what will be a community treasure. If you've driven by the building recently, you must have noticed the amazing transformation of this building.

Other critical maintenance projects that have benefited from Council funding are: the ongoing campus-wide utility upgrades at Bronx Community College, we are completing phase 4 and starting phase 5 in total the project costs is over \$170 million and there is still another phase; a complete replacement of the electrical system at Queensborough Community College so that the college no longer

Fiscal Year 2020 Preliminary Budget Hearing Final Capital

suffers from power outages; and the phased renovation of Hostos Community College's 500 Grand Concourse Building. And roof replacements across the University, which are in need of repair at every campus.

We are pleased to report all this activity but must emphasize that critical maintenance continues to be a major capital priority at our community college campuses and we are still in need of your support for the long-term effort. We have over 7 million square feet of community college facilities, three-quarters of which is over 40 years old. The most serious need remains to be infrastructure systems that support facility operations.

We are also pleased to inform you we are planning to expand our space in Inwood for the CUNY in the Heights program associated with Borough of Manhattan Community College and Hostos Community College. The expansion will allow us to continue to increase vital higher education services to the community, providing many career ladders to educational attainment and careers. We estimate the expansion will cost \$6 million.

Fiscal Year 2020 Preliminary Budget Hearing Final Capital

We continue to seek additional city and state funding building expansion projects in every borough. For instance we very much need funding for another important initiative, which is \$50 million for a new, permanent facility for Guttman Community College.

The work on our facilities continues and is integral to realizing those important goals. CUNY is a community treasure. Thank you for your support, and for all you do for CUNY and New Yorkers.

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: March 7

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Judy Bergtraum

Address: _____

I represent: CUNY

Address: 205 E 42 Street

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CUNY Panel

Appearance Card

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Name: Kisha Fuentes

Address: University Manager - child care & leadership

I represent: CUNY

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Name: Barbara Bowen

Address: 61 Broadway Ste 1500

I represent: Professional Staff Congress

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1 of 2

Appearance Card

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Date: _____

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Name: Matthew Sapienza, CFO & Senior Vice

Address: Chancellor for Budget & Finance

I represent: CUNY

Address: _____

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