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Before the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York

Concerning the Pathways Initiative

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The Pathways initiative, in spite of its chimera of educational efficiency, is going to leave many of the thorny operational issues of student transfer unsolved. Time permits me to illustrate only one of these problems: CUNY's inability to provide the transcripts of transfer students to the receiving colleges in a timely fashion.

Currently, Baruch is provided limited information when accepting transfer students, and that information does not include the students' course transcripts; Baruch cannot anticipate what courses the students will require should they transfer to Baruch. Baruch receives the transcript information only when the students enroll in Baruch. Compounding this problem, last year CUNY provided Baruch with the bulk of its transfers very late in the summer.

I schedule the courses for Baruch's Computer Information Systems (CIS) programs. One of these courses is CIS2200, a preliminary course to all of the business majors (and will apparently remain so with Pathways as one of the five preliminary courses to the business majors). As of last Wednesday, June 13, there were 239 seats left in the twenty jumbo sections we have scheduled for the Fall 2012 semester. That may seem like a lot of seats, but when almost two-thirds of our incoming students are transfers, 239 seats may not be sufficient. Unfortunately, without the transcript information of the incoming transfer students, Baruch's academic planners have limited data for predicting how many students will need to take this and other required courses when they arrive (even if Pathways goes into effect, there will be some required

courses). The budgetary and space constraints facing Baruch limit our options for adding more sections, for we cannot afford the slack resources of many empty seats in a new section, and we have limited classroom space. In addition, adding sections at the last minute creates quality control issues in course delivery, for many high-quality adjuncts are already scheduled elsewhere by that time. Without the last minute sections, however, students can't get into required courses and that affects their academic progress.

The absence of timely transcript information leads to many delayed graduations—probably more delayed graduations than the current rigorous curricula that Pathways seeks to reduce. Solutions to these very real stumbling blocks require difficult organizational and operational work, and not just simplistic, sweeping mandates. Unfortunately, the Pathways initiative does not address the serious operational deficiencies in our academic planning capabilities.

Strategic initiatives that are not grounded in operational reality do not solve real problems.