

Testimony of Brijraj Singh
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Before the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York

Concerning the Pathways Initiative

June 18, 2012

My name is Brijraj Singh and I am emeritus in English at Hostos Community College. I stand before you to argue, first, that Pathways, though well intentioned as a means of helping community college students and bringing about greater integration in the University, will prove hurtful to precisely those students and those colleges which it is intended to help; and second, that increasing the executive pay package is a bad idea.

Many good arguments have been made against Pathways. Rather than rehearse them, I would add simply that if implemented, it will encourage community college students to seek transfer after they complete the thirty mandated liberal arts credits. That is, they will quit at the end of the first year of their A.A. program, even though for remedial and other reasons it may take them more than a year to reach there. And because the preponderant majority of community college students are liberal arts majors—this is certainly the case at Hostos—their mass migration before they finish their A.A. degrees, caused by Pathways, will result in the A.A. degree losing its meaning and integrity. Furthermore, the loss of senior students at community colleges will be deleterious to these institutions, since they will now be reduced to being mere nurseries for senior colleges and training grounds for vocations and careers. Has anyone considered the impact of such a situation on faculty morale and scholarship?

Turning to executive pay, the proposal to increase salary ranges is motivated, among other considerations, by the fact that such an increase would make them competitive. Maybe it will, though to me they are competitive enough. The question is: Are they any less competitive than faculty salaries? Obviously not. It is far easier for a person to live well on a Dean's or Chancellor's salary than it is for even a senior faculty member. Even if it is granted, which I refuse to grant, that a disparity is inevitable between the pay of a senior administrator and that of a professor, no justification exists for raising executive salaries while leaving those of the faculty untouched. I urge you to consider whether, if you are desirous of making pay packages competitive, you would not do better to raise faculty salaries rather than those of the top administrators who already make enough.

Thank you.

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