

NEW YORK NEEDS FREE, QUALITY PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

A Case for Increased Investment in CUNY

Executive Summary

The CUNY Rising Alliance Students' Bill of Rights calls for free, high-quality education in a safe and modern learning environment for all CUNY students. This white paper, a companion to the Students' Bill of Rights, details City and State disinvestment in CUNY and the University's imperiled mission. It calls on the City and the State to phase in \$2 billion in funding to provide every CUNY student with the free education, high-contact teaching and advisement, and robust supports provided via the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) initiative.

CUNY Students and Their Contributions to New York

For a half-million New Yorkers per year, the path to economic opportunity, intellectual fulfillment, and personal growth starts at CUNY.

- 60% of the city's college-bound students enroll at CUNY.
- 40% of CUNY undergraduates were born outside the U.S.
- 77% percent of undergraduate CUNY students are people of color.
- 59% are from families with annual incomes less than \$30,000.

CUNY powers the city and state economies, grows their tax bases and narrows inequality.

- 82% of CUNY bachelor's degree holders are still living in NYS 10 years after graduation.
- CUNY alumni who graduated with associate degrees from CUNY in 2015 earned \$74 million more and paid \$7.3 million more in City and State taxes in their first year of employment than they would have with only high school diplomas.
- Bachelor's degree holders who graduated in 2015 earned \$225 million more and paid \$23.9 million more in City and State taxes in their first year of employment than they would have with only high school diplomas.

All CUNY Students Need ASAP-level Investments

About 8,000 students attend tuition-free as part of CUNY's nationally renowned and well-funded Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) initiative. That number will grow to 25,000 by 2018 thanks to promised investments from the City, but still fewer than 10% of matriculated CUNY students will benefit. ASAP students are more likely to succeed at CUNY and graduate faster than other CUNY students because they receive high-contact teaching and advisement and robust supports that CUNY cannot afford to offer to most students.

ASAP's three-year graduation rate is 53%, as compared to 17.5% for full-time community college students throughout CUNY and 16% at urban community colleges nationwide.

City and State Disinvestment in CUNY

City and State funding has failed to keep up with inflation and CUNY's enrollment growth.

- From 2008 – 2015, per-student funding from the State fell 17% at CUNY senior colleges and 5% at community colleges, when adjusted for inflation.
- Per-student City funding for the community colleges fell 13% over the same period, when adjusted for inflation.

Disinvestment Threatens Affordability

Tuition hikes are an access barrier to CUNY for low-income New Yorkers excluded from or underserved by financial aid.

- The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), New York's need-based financial aid program, exclude most of CUNY's 84,000 part-time students and all undocumented students.
- Poor, unmarried, childless adults receive inadequate TAP aid because the income ceiling that determines their eligibility is decades out of date.

Tuition hikes are a growing burden on middle-income families.

- From 2005 -2015, NYC's median household income increased 21%, when adjusted for inflation. CUNY tuition, when adjusted for inflation, increased by 30% and 41% at the senior and community colleges, respectively, over the same period.
- The median household income for New Yorkers of Hispanic or Latino origin increased by only four percent from 2005 -2015 when adjusted for inflation.
- The median household income of African Americans in New York City from 2005 -2015 actually declined two percent when adjusted for inflation.

CUNY Should Be Free.

Lawmakers should approach "free" from two directions. From one side, financial aid should be expanded to help more low-income and working families. From the other side, increases in City and State support should fund first a tuition freeze and then reductions in the sticker price of tuition. Replacing tuition not covered by financial aid for CUNY's senior and community colleges would cost \$784 million. For CUNY to be truly accessible, aid for books, transportation, food, housing and other costs of attendance should be provided for those who need it.

Disinvestment Undermines Quality at CUNY

CUNY has lacked the funds to hire full-time faculty at a rate that could keep up with enrollment growth. CUNY is far short of its goal of 70% full-time faculty instruction.

- The number of full-time faculty at CUNY increased 36% from 2000 – 2015, but the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students, a measure of how many students are in the classroom, increased 46% over the same period.
- In 2005-2006, 50% of undergraduate instruction was provided by full-time faculty. By 2015-2016, only 47% of undergraduate instruction was provided by full-time faculty.
- In 2015-2016, only 35% of undergraduate instruction was provided by full-time faculty at John Jay College and College of Staten Island.
- 22% of CUNY students report not being able to register for a course needed to graduate; 47% of students could not register for a course required for their major.

CUNY Needs 4,000 More Full-time Faculty.

70% of instruction should be provided by full-time faculty. 4,000 new full-time faculty are required to reach that goal. Adding 4,000 new full-time faculty lines would require a net increase in CUNY's funding of roughly \$325 million dollars per year. The first step should be an investment by the State and City in 1,000 new full-time faculty lines at a cost of roughly \$81 million dollars per year.

Without funding to hire enough full-time faculty, CUNY has increasingly relied on underpaid part-time adjunct faculty.

- CUNY's low-wage adjunct faculty workforce numbers over 12,000.
- The number of adjunct faculty at CUNY increased 73% from 2000-2015.
- 53% of all undergraduate CUNY courses are taught by adjuncts.
- Adjuncts are paid about \$3,500 per course and are hired on a per-course basis.

Adjuncts Should Be Paid \$7,000 Per Course.

Adjunct faculty should have pay and working conditions that are supportive of quality education. Paying adjuncts a parity salary rate of \$7,000 per course, pegged to the salary of CUNY's full-time lecturers would require \$92 million from the City and State, if 30 percent of CUNY courses are taught by adjuncts.

Support to Aid Retention and Completion is Vastly Underfunded

Facing challenges as varied as their backgrounds, all CUNY students need the mix of supports and services, the high levels of individual attention, mentorship, and academic assistance provided through ASAP and other programs. But students' needs dwarf CUNY's capacity.

- CUNY's goal is to hire one new academic advisor for every 150 new students enrolled in ASAP. For the rest of CUNY, the ratio is 430 students per advisor.
- Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK) and College Discovery (CD) enrolled less than 3,000 freshmen in Fall 2014 from an applicant pool of almost 28,000.
- 15,000 undergraduate CUNY students are likely supporting children of pre-school age, but only 1,600 student-parents are served by CUNY's campus child care centers.

CUNY Needs Big investments in Student Support Services.

The City and State should provide the funding necessary to scale up CUNY's student success programs and increase the number of students who have access.

Approximately 800 new academic advisors should be hired at a cost of about \$50 million so all CUNY students can have high-contact advisement.

City funding for campus-based, low-cost childcare should be tripled from \$500,000 to \$1.5 million. State funding should be increased as well.

CUNY Desperately Needs Capital Improvement

Albany and City Hall do not adequately invest in capital funding to replace and rebuild aging facilities or address the critical maintenance needs of CUNY's infrastructure.

- FTE enrollment has risen 46% in the last 15 years, but college facilities have not been expanded sufficiently to adequately accommodate CUNY's enlarged student body.
- Lack of classroom space and modern science and computer labs is a problem for students and faculty.
- University operating budget doesn't support a maintenance staff large enough to keep up with day-to-day repairs.

Albany and City Hall Must Invest in CUNY's Physical Plant.

The City and State should increase capital funding to CUNY to construct more classrooms, labs and other learning spaces. Funding for Critical Maintenance must be increased to speed the University's rate of repair and upgrade. Adequate staffing levels and resources for campus maintenance must be provided for in the CUNY operating budget and funded by the City and State so day-to-day repairs can be quickly accomplished.

NEW YORK NEEDS FREE, QUALITY PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

A Case for Increased Investment in CUNY

Introduction

College education is widely recognized as an important path to economic opportunity, intellectual fulfillment, and personal growth. It is a critical public investment that helps to narrow inequality and transform lives. For nearly a half-million matriculated and continuing-education students per year, the path to a better life starts at CUNY — The City University of New York.

The CUNY Rising Alliance is a broad coalition of organizations who serve, represent and minister to millions of New Yorkers. Our communities and constituents are the most hurt by policies of austerity and disinvestment from public institutions like CUNY. Living in a city with record income inequality and profound, systemic racial disparities in education, the New Yorkers we work with depend on a high-quality CUNY education for a chance at the American Dream.

CUNY is a place where New Yorkers whose parents and grandparents may have never finished school can reimagine themselves and their futures. Twenty percent of CUNY undergraduates are the first in their families to attend college. It is a place where immigrants and the children of immigrants can thrive. More than 40 percent of CUNY undergraduates were born outside the United States and 44 percent are the children of immigrants.¹ CUNY is also a dynamic place of learning, where research creates new knowledge, where cultural and racial diversity break down biases and expand students' understanding of the world, where blue-collar and professional staff, faculty and students all contribute.

From its roots in the Free Academy of New York founded in 1847 (later renamed City College), CUNY's mission has been to educate "the children of the whole people" of New York, to serve the children of immigrants, the poor, and the working-class of New York City. The State legislation that united New York City's municipal colleges into a single, integrated university system in 1961 was clear about CUNY's mission:

...The university must remain responsive to the needs of its urban setting... [and] continue to maintain and expand its commitment to academic excellence and to the

¹ "[Alumni, Students and Faculty](#)." *CUNY.edu*. Web. 28 November 2016.

provision of equal access and opportunity for students, faculty and staff from all ethnic and racial groups and from both sexes...²

For most of their history, CUNY colleges provided a merit-based free education to matriculated students and charged affordable instructional fees to non-matriculant students. From 1970 - 1975, CUNY accepted all applicants with a high school diploma and all undergraduate students attended CUNY tuition-free.³

Graduates during the free era contributed mightily to the academic, cultural, civic and economic life of our city, state and nation. Today's CUNY students, alumni and faculty are no less impressive. CUNY boasts among its alumni 13 Nobel Laureates, renowned jurists, acclaimed writers, professors at universities across the nation, city and state lawmakers and countless business leaders, professionals and public-service workers.⁴ CUNY's subway ads have paid tribute to faculty hired since 2000, including ground-breaking scientists and engineers, cutting-edge researchers, award-winning poets, authors and musicians, along with an ever-growing list of students who have won prestigious fellowships. CUNY has enrolled 70 Fulbright Scholars, 70 National Science Foundation Fellows, 10 Truman Scholars and seven Rhodes Scholars.⁵

Most CUNY alumni make their lives here in New York, helping to grow the economies and tax bases of the city and state. More than 80 percent of CUNY bachelor's degree holders are still living in the state 10 years after graduation.⁶ CUNY graduates earn more and pay more taxes because of their increased earning potential once they have a college degree. Alumni who graduated with associate degrees from CUNY in 2015 earned \$74 million more and paid \$7.3 million more in City and State taxes in their first year of employment than they would have with only high school diplomas.⁷ Bachelor's degree holders who graduated in 2015 did even better. They earned \$225 million more and paid \$23.9 million more in City and State taxes in their first year of employment than they would have with only high school diplomas.⁸

Yet, for all its accomplishments, CUNY is increasingly falling short of its potential as years of public disinvestment take their toll. The University is at once a place of rich learning and scholarship, an incubator of innovative programs shown to increase college access and success, and, simultaneously, a resource-starved institution increasingly forced to make choices that threaten to reproduce the economic and racial inequalities it promises to reduce.

² ["New York State Education Law § 6201 Legislative Findings and Intent."](#)

³ ["When Tuition at CUNY Was Free, Sort Of."](#) *CUNY Newswire*. 12 October 2011.

⁴ ["City University of New York, Notable Alumni."](#) *Wikipedia*. Web. 29 November 2016.

⁵ ["Mission and History."](#) *CUNY.edu*. Web. 29 November 2016.

⁶ ["Protecting the Investment in New York's Tax Base."](#) *CUNY.edu*. Web. 28 November 2016.

⁷ ["Protecting the Investment in New York's Tax Base."](#)

⁸ ["Protecting the Investment in New York's Tax Base."](#)

The CUNY Rising Alliance’s Student Bill of Rights

The CUNY Rising Alliance has released a Students’ Bill of Rights calling for free, high-quality education in a safe and modern learning environment for all CUNY students. This white paper, a companion to the Students’ Bill of Rights, details the deepening disinvestment in CUNY, the University’s imperiled mission, and the urgent need for a substantial public investment from Albany and City Hall to provide the free, high-quality college education New York students deserve.

An Era of Disinvestment

New York City’s high school graduation rate has increased 24 percentage points since 2005, and in 2015, it hit an all-time high of 70 percent.⁹ Today 60 percent of the city’s college-bound students enroll at CUNY. Many of those students have remedial needs because they graduated from underfunded high schools that struggle to prepare students for the rigors of college. Seventy-seven percent of undergraduate CUNY students are people of color, 38 percent are immigrants and 59 percent are from families with annual incomes less than \$30,000.¹⁰ CUNY students need more investment and support – not years of underfunding – if CUNY is to meet the demands of its historic mission of educating all New Yorkers.

Public funding for CUNY senior colleges is provided by the State. CUNY community colleges receive funding from both the City and the State.¹¹ The City also provides a relatively small amount of funding to support two-year associate degree programs housed at specific CUNY senior colleges.¹²

Recent City and State investments have improved the funding situation at CUNY community colleges, but overall CUNY remains vastly underfunded. Funding from both the City and State has failed to keep up with inflation and CUNY’s enrollment growth. From 2008 – 2015, for example, full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment increased 10 percent at CUNY senior colleges, but per-student funding from the State fell 17 percent when adjusted for inflation.¹³ Over the same period, FTE enrollment increased 23 percent at CUNY community colleges, but per-

⁹ Wall, Patrick. “[New York City’s graduation rate hits 70 percent for first time](#).” *Chalkbeat*. 11 January 2016.

¹⁰ [2016 Student Experience Survey](#). CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.

¹¹ Section 6304 of the State Education Law says the State will provide 40% of community college operating costs. But that provision is set aside every year in the State budget.

¹² The City’s \$32 million investment in these associate programs at senior colleges has remained flat for decades. In its budget request for 2017-18, CUNY asks the City to increase this funding to \$58 million to account for inflation.

¹³ PSC/CUNY analysis. Calculated using revenue and enrollment figures from CUNY Budget Documents. Includes funding for fringe benefits. Figures are adjusted for inflation with the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) issued by the Common Fund Institute.

student funding from the State declined five percent and per-student funding from the City for community colleges declined 13 percent, when adjusted for inflation.

These numbers powerfully underscore the lack of political will to invest adequately in the futures of students of color and poor, working-class students. With this steady drumbeat of disinvestment in the background, Governor Andrew Cuomo's Executive Budget last year sent shockwaves through the CUNY community: the governor proposed a \$485 million reduction in State aid for the University and unilaterally announced a "cost shift" that would require the City to pay hundreds of millions of dollars more for expenses it had never previously covered. The proposed cost shift was dropped in the final State budget after a public outcry and a community push-back that prompted the creation of the CUNY Rising Alliance.

Over the years, CUNY's central administration has responded to continuing public disinvestment by raising tuition (as made possible by State lawmakers). CUNY's senior college tuition rate is authorized in the State budget process. City and State lawmakers don't play a direct role in setting community college tuition rates, though their failure to fund community colleges adequately is, nonetheless, the root cause of community college tuition hikes. CUNY's other accommodations to disinvestment include offering fewer classes taught by full-time faculty and more by low-wage adjuncts, tiering the University into open-access community colleges and selective senior colleges, and filtering the most academically talented students into specially funded programs, such as the Macaulay Honors College.

We Know What Works

Although the larger university and the vast majority of its students are starved of resources, CUNY has leveraged smaller targeted investments to launch islands of effective innovation for a relatively small number of students. Notable among these initiatives have been successful college entry programs like CUNY Start, the CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP) and the nationally celebrated Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP). CUNY Start provides concentrated instruction for students with remedial needs. CLIP offers intensive instruction in English language skills, especially reading and writing. ASAP invests in direct financial support for students and focused advising to help community college students graduate on time.

ASAP demonstrates what CUNY can accomplish for students when the University receives sufficient public funding. The program is well-funded, providing free tuition, enriched teaching, high-contact advisement and robust support services. ASAP students are required to attend full-time, but are provided the resources that allow them to do so. ASAP students have their remaining tuition waived if they don't receive full financial aid. Textbooks and unlimited MetroCards are also provided to ASAP students, relieving them of some of the stressful demands of balancing work and studies.

The program is located on nine CUNY campuses offering associate degrees. Its record of success has been impressive. ASAP's three-year graduation rate is 53 percent, as compared to 17.5 percent for full-time, first-time community college students throughout CUNY and 16 percent at urban community colleges nationwide.¹⁴ (Full-time, first-time first-year CUNY students in four-year baccalaureate programs have a six-year graduation rate of 53.9 percent. The national six-year graduation rate for public four colleges is 58.5 percent.)

While the public cost per student in ASAP is significantly higher than the cost per student throughout CUNY's community colleges, the cost per graduate in ASAP is significantly lower than the cost per graduate throughout CUNY's community colleges—about \$6,500 less per completed degree according to one study.¹⁵

The City and State have recognized the value of ASAP, and increased its funding, but the program's reach still falls far short of what is needed. The University plans to scale up ASAP from about 4,000 to 25,000 students by 2018 as a result a recent \$42 million investment from the City.¹⁶ As part of the expansion, Bronx Community College is slated to be CUNY's first all-ASAP college. A small privately-funded pilot program at John Jay College called John Jay ACE is also testing the ASAP model for students seeking bachelor's degrees. Even with this scaling up, the essential supports provided by ASAP will cover less than 10 percent of CUNY's matriculated students.

The CUNY Rising Alliance's Students Bill of Rights calls for a university where every CUNY student receives the supports provided to ASAP students. Every CUNY student should have access to a free public higher education, quality instruction, support to aid their progression to completing a degree, and safe, modern learning environments. These elements of ASAP should be fundamental rights afforded to all students, not just a lucky few.

Free Public Higher Education

Tuition

CUNY Rising believes CUNY should be free for all students. Until the mid-1970s, students who attended CUNY for free were able to do so because the University and its municipal-college predecessors were well-funded by City lawmakers willing to invest in the public good of higher

¹⁴ Graduation rates for ASAP and urban community college nationwide source: CUNY Master Plan, pg 45; CUNY community college graduation rate source: System Retention and Graduation Rates of Full-time First-time Freshmen in Associate Programs by Year of Entry: Total University. CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. 26 April 2016.

¹⁵ Levin, Henry. Garcia, Emma. *Benefit-Cost Analysis of Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) of the City University of New York (CUNY)*. May 2013.

¹⁶ Colangelo, Lisa. Chapman, Ben. "[CUNY unveils \\$42M plan to boost graduation rates.](#)" *Daily News*. 16 October 2015.

education. Starting with New York City's fiscal crisis of 1975 and the State's take-over of CUNY senior college funding, CUNY has experienced decades of public disinvestment, and lawmakers have facilitated a shift in financing to a high-tuition, high-financial aid model. Importantly, the federal Pell grant, a need-based subsidy for low-income students, has in the intervening years come to represent a significant portion of CUNY's annual revenues.¹⁷

The CUNY Rising Alliance recognizes that "free" is a complicated and expensive proposition that will take some time to accomplish, even if the political will exists to make it so. Therefore, we advocate approaching the problem of CUNY affordability from two directions. One approach would emphasize State financial aid being improved and expanded. The other would produce increased public funding for the University to first finance a tuition freeze and later a policy of replacing tuition dollars with public dollars.

Today CUNY tuition costs \$6,330 per year for full-time undergraduates at senior colleges and \$4,800 for full-time students at community colleges. Tuition has been frozen for the 2016-2017 academic year. Presently, however, the University is seeking \$250 tuition increases at the senior colleges for each of the next four years and increases of \$100 per year at community colleges over the same time period.¹⁸

CUNY administrators, whenever they ask Albany lawmakers to approve a tuition hike, proclaim that 70 percent of full-time CUNY undergraduates pay no tuition because of need-based financial aid.¹⁹ That is true, but that simple narrative masks a broader more complex story.

Continued tuition hikes bar access to CUNY for many low-income New Yorkers who fall through the gaps in New York's financial aid system. Thirty-four percent of matriculated CUNY students (almost 84,000) are part-time students.²⁰ (Many of these students have to work and can't balance full-time work and full-time course loads). The vast majority of part-time students receive no State financial aid, even if they are low-income. Rules governing the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), New York's largest need-based financial aid program, exclude the vast majority of part-time students and all undocumented students. Tuition hikes also limit access for working-poor, unmarried, childless adults who receive inadequate TAP aid because the income ceiling that determines their eligibility is decades out of date.²¹

¹⁷ Seven percent of the University's 2016-2017 budget.

¹⁸ "2017-2018 Operating Budget Request and Four-Year Financial Plan." Pg 8. CUNY Board of Trustees. 24 October 2016. The budget request names a community college tuition increase, but sends a mixed message about it, also saying, "CUNY is prepared to freeze community college tuition for the second straight year at current rates, if our funding request is met through other sources."

¹⁹ "Chancellor Delivers Leon M. Goldstein Memorial Lecture." 9 May 2016. *CUNY.edu*. Web. 6 October 2016.

²⁰ *Total Enrollment by Undergraduate and Graduate Level, Full-time/Part-time Attendance, and College*. CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. 25 April 2016.

²¹ Their yearly Net Taxable Income must be below \$10,000 to qualify for TAP.

Low-income New Yorkers who are poorly served, or not served at all, by State financial aid struggle to afford even what is seemingly a most modest tuition hike. That is especially true at CUNY community colleges, which are among the most expensive two-year public colleges in the nation. As well it is the case at the senior colleges, which are mid-priced when compared to four-year public colleges in other states.²² Dramatic tuition increases at public colleges have been a problem throughout the nation.

Tuition costs are only the beginning of the financial challenges faced by CUNY students. The cost of living in New York City is among the highest in the country. It affects not only low-income students, but also those in middle-income brackets who struggle to make ends meet. Tuition hikes are a very real and increasing burden on middle-income students because they typically qualify for little or no financial aid. A full-time, dependent CUNY student from a family earning New York City's median household income of \$55,752 would qualify for little to no need-based financial aid from the federal Pell Grant. They would, however, qualify for the minimum New York State TAP award of \$500 per year. If the student were to qualify for the New York City Council Merit Scholarship, they would receive another \$800 per year.²³

These modest amounts of aid for middle-income families do not negate the fact that the rise in CUNY tuition has far outpaced the rate of growth of New York City's median income. From 2005 – 2015, the median household income for all New Yorkers increased 21 percent, when adjusted for inflation.²⁴ CUNY tuition, when adjusted for inflation, increased by 30 percent and 41 percent at the senior and community colleges, respectively, over the same period.²⁵ The median household income of New Yorkers of Hispanic or Latino origin increased by only four percent from 2005 – 2015 when adjusted for inflation, and the median household income for African Americans in the city actually declined two percent.

Tuition hikes by lawmakers have shifted an increasing share of the responsibility to fund CUNY on to students and families while failing to improve the quality of a CUNY education. To wit, the share of total funding for CUNY senior colleges provided by the State fell from 74 percent in 1990-1991 to 53 percent in 2014-2015.²⁶ The share of CUNY senior college funding generated by tuition and fees increased over the same period from 21 percent to 46 percent. A similar

²² [Trends in College Pricing 2016. 2016 Figures and Tables: Table 5.](#) College Board. October 2016.

²³ "New York City Scholarships." *CUNY.edu*. Web. 29 November 2016

²⁴ "[Median Income in the Past 12 Months, New York City, NY, 2005 and 2015.](#)" *American Fact Finder*. U.S. Census Bureau. Web. 28 November 2016. Percent changes in median household incomes for all New York households and households by race calculated by converting 2005 figures to 2015 dollars and calculating the change between adjusted 2005 and 2015 figures.

²⁵ CUNY senior college tuition increased from \$4,000 (nominal)/\$4,854 (inflation-adjusted) in 2005 to \$6,330 in 2015. Community college tuition increased from \$2,800 (nominal)/ \$3,398 (inflation-adjusted) in 2005 to \$4,800 in 2015.

²⁶ *Keep the Promise of CUNY. Invest In Opportunity for All.* Professional Staff Congress. Spring 2015.

increase in tuition dependence happened at CUNY community colleges, where both the State and City decreased their shares of support over time.

State disinvestment continued under the SUNY 2020 law, passed in 2011. This legislation enacted five years of annual \$300 tuition hikes at the state's public senior colleges and promised that increased tuition payments would be invested in ways that enhance the quality of students' education. Sadly, SUNY 2020 failed to fully account for university operating costs in its weak "maintenance-of-effort" provision.²⁷ Consequently, the revenue from the annual tuition hikes was mostly used to cover basic operating expenses rather than improve the quality of a CUNY education. The CUNY administration pushed for the annual tuition hikes that were eventually enacted in SUNY 2020 using an older framework they called the "CUNY Compact." The Compact accepted "rational tuition increases" in exchange for increased state investment to enhance the quality of a CUNY education. Predictably, the first half of this compact, tuition hikes, was quickly implemented while the second half, increased public investment in a quality education, never became a reality.

SUNY 2020 disrupted CUNY's operating budget in other ways. The law required CUNY to provide eligible students with a partial tuition credit, called a "TAP waiver credit," which covers the difference between the full cost of tuition (currently \$6,330 at CUNY) and the maximum TAP award (currently \$5,165). The resulting TAP waiver credits protect many—but not all—low-income students from the effects of tuition hikes, but they do so at significant cost to CUNY. For the 2016-2017 academic year, CUNY will issue \$51 million in TAP waiver credits.²⁸ If the maximum TAP award had been aligned with CUNY tuition, as it has been historically, CUNY would have been able to invest the \$51 million in academics and student support services. The 2017-2018 CUNY budget request calls on the City to phase in funding—an additional \$10 million per year for the next four years—to partially offset the State funds lost because of the SUNY 2020 TAP waiver credits.

CUNY Rising, along with a growing list of education advocates and policy makers, believes that students should be able to attend a public college or university tuition-free. CUNY was free once; it can be free again. The politics of college tuition are changing: there is national momentum for free tuition and an active local movement for free tuition in the city. New Yorkers are ready to take the first steps; the lawmakers who represent us should begin the policy shift toward tuition-free college.

²⁷ [State Education Law Section 355](#). The maintenance-of-effort language in NYSUNY 2020 set a minimum level of annual State funding for CUNY and SUNY at no less than the previous year's allocation. Annual operating cost increases for rent, energy, and contractual salary increases were not accounted for in the maintenance of effort. SUNY 2020 expired after the 2015-2016 academic year.

²⁸ "2017-2018 Operating Budget Request and Four-Year Financial Plan." Pg 7. CUNY Board of Trustees.

- To fund tuition-free public higher education, New York State must reform its tax policy. A more progressive tax system could reduce New York's massive income inequality in two ways: by distributing the tax burden more equitably and by expanding low-income New Yorkers' most critical path to upward mobility and higher incomes, high-quality public higher education. Graduated increases of tax rates on the richest one percent of New York State tax payers, whose incomes are over \$665,000, would generate \$2.2 billion in new tax revenues, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute, a CUNY Rising Alliance member organization.²⁹
- Recognizing that a shift to tuition-free education will take time, CUNY Rising advocates a fully-funded tuition freeze as a first step. The State should fund the senior college tuition freeze with annual increases in public funding, increases that cover *both* year-to-year inflationary operating cost increases and programmatic improvements. The City and State must also increase their funding for CUNY community colleges to maintain a tuition freeze. A \$200.6 million increase in investment is needed from both the City and the State to cover CUNY's needed operating costs and fund a tuition freeze for 2017-2018 at the level of staffing and student supports proposed in the CUNY budget request.
- All low-income students must have access to TAP, including undocumented students, part-time students and graduate students. Income schedules governing awards for working-poor, unmarried, childless adults should be updated. Income thresholds governing TAP awards should also be increased so students with family incomes near the median income can access greater award amounts. As well, TAP waiver credits awarded by CUNY must be offset with public funds.
- Finally, public funding should be significantly and incrementally increased so tuition can be reduced and eventually eliminated for all students. Replacing tuition not covered by financial aid for CUNY's senior and community colleges would presently cost \$784 million per year.³⁰ But only replacing tuition dollars would still leave CUNY starved of resources. CUNY's overall funding from the

²⁹ [New York's Regressive Tax Structure and the 1% Plan for Tax Fairness](#). Fiscal Policy Institute. February 2016. Some CUNY Rising member organizations do not take positions on tax policy.

³⁰ Testimony of Catherine Abata, University Budget Director, CUNY, before the NYC Council Higher Education Committee, 16 June 2016. CUNY will collect \$1.5 billion in tuition revenue in 2016-2017. Forty-nine percent of tuition revenue was covered by financial aid and scholarships 2016-2017. Approximately \$784 million in tuition was paid out-of-pocket by students.

City and State must be increased with new investments that enhance the quality of education.

Other Costs of Attendance

CUNY estimates that the other costs of attending college (i.e. fees, books, transport, room and board) amount to almost \$10,000 per year for a student living at home or with relatives and more than \$20,000 per-year for a student living away from home.³¹ (Most CUNY students live at home or with family.) The cost of child care is not included in CUNY's estimates.

State TAP aid covers full tuition for many, but not all, of the lowest income full-time CUNY students. Many of these low-income students also receive the maximum grant from the federal financial aid program, Pell, of \$5,815 per year, which can be used for non-tuition educationally related expenses as well as tuition.³² Using CUNY's estimate, a poor, full-time student receiving maximum allowances from both TAP and Pell is still left with \$4,185 in unmet costs. Federal work study, a small merit scholarship from the City, and other private scholarships can help reduce this deficit for some students. Importantly, even students with the most financial aid are likely to have out-of-pocket expenses that can threaten their access to college.

Non-tuition costs such as child care and textbooks clearly keep some New Yorkers from attending CUNY. There are also New Yorkers, especially those in dire financial straits, who choose not to attend CUNY because of the opportunity cost of not working full-time while they are enrolled. But many who do attend CUNY still must work, borrow or scrimp to make up the difference between any financial aid that they receive and the total cost of attending college. (53 percent of CUNY undergraduates work.)

Juggling work and family obligations can undermine students' academic success. As emergency financial problems often slow progress to graduation or cause higher rates of drop out. Tellingly, thirty-nine percent of CUNY students experience food insecurity and 42 percent experience housing instability.³³ Because of this food insecurity, CUNY colleges partner with the Food Bank for New York City to operate more than a dozen campus food banks.³⁴

³¹ "[Tuition & Fees – Related Costs](#)." *CUNY.edu*. Web. 28 November 2016

³² The maximum Pell Grant is scheduled to increase to \$5,920 for 2017-18. Pell can cover Tuition and fees normally assessed; books, supplies, transportation, and miscellaneous personal expenses; living expenses such as room and board; and an allowance for costs expected to be incurred for dependent care for a student with dependents.

³³ Freudenberg, Nicholas; Manzo, Luis; Jones, Hollie; Kwan, Amy; Tsui, Emma; Gagnon, Monica. "Food Insecurity at CUNY: Results from a Survey of CUNY Undergraduate Students" and "Housing Instability at CUNY: Results from a Survey of CUNY Undergraduate Students." *The Campaign for a Healthy CUNY* April 2011.

³⁴ West, Melanie. "Food Pantries Grow on New York Campuses." *Wall Street Journal*. 9 October 2014.

Even if students can enroll in their desired classes, they often confront overcrowded classrooms, frequently leading to a significant diminishment in student learning. Smaller class size is linked to greater academic success. It gives faculty more time to devote to individual students and to instruct in ways that stimulate critical thinking and communication.³⁹ These best classroom practices, however, were undermined in the 2015-2016 academic year when CUNY's central administration ordered the senior colleges to cut their budgets to fill a \$50 million shortfall in CUNY's operating budget.⁴⁰

When college budgets are tight, campus administrations freeze new hiring, especially of full-time faculty, and direct departments to hire fewer adjunct faculty. These directives in turn force departments to shrink course offerings and increase class size. Even when hiring freezes aren't in effect, budget constraints often result in departments slowing their recruitment of new full-time faculty.

Full-time Faculty Shortage

In 1975, CUNY had more than 11,000 full-time faculty and 250,000 students.⁴¹ In 2015 these numbers are 7,580 full-time faculty and 274,000 students (203,529 full-time equivalent students).⁴² This decline in full-time faculty, in combination with the growth of student enrollment, is a continuing threat to academic quality at the University. It undermines students' success and completion.

A growing body of research indicates that students, especially low-income and at-risk students, perform better and are more likely to graduate when interactions with faculty are maximized.⁴³ For students, CUNY's shortage of full-time faculty means less time for individual attention in the classroom. It results in oversized classes, lost opportunities for academic and career mentorship for students and heavier workloads for professors. These shortages also mean that the work required to run a department and build an academic discipline is divided among too few faculty. Time for faculty to engage in research is also diminished when there is a shortage of full-time faculty and expansion of departmental work for full-time instructors. In turn, this

³⁹ Benton, Stephen and Pallett, William. "[Class Size Matters](#)." *Inside Higher Ed*. 29 January 2013.

⁴⁰ Sapienza, Matthew. *Fiscal Year 2017 Senior College Operating Budget Allocation*. Memo to Senior College Presidents/Deans. 29 June 2016. In 2015-2016 senior college allocations were reduced by 3% (6% for the CUNY central office). In 2016-2017, senior college budgets are being reduced by an additional 2% (5% for the CUNY central office).

⁴¹ [Investing In Our Future: The City University of New York's Master Plan 2012-2016](#). pg 16.

⁴² [Staff Facts Fall 2015](#). CUNY Office of Human Resources Management. Pg 3.

⁴³ [Faculty Matter: Selected Research on Connections between Faculty-Student Interaction and Student Success](#) and [Selected Research on Connections between Non-Tenure-Track Faculty and Student Learning](#). The Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty and Student Success

circumstance undermines the faculty's capacity to enhance the prestige of the University and inform students' learning in and outside the classroom.

CUNY administrators are aware of all these challenges and as a result, in the last several CUNY Master Plans, they have articulated commitments to both hiring more full-time faculty and increasing the proportion of courses taught by full-time faculty. The University's 2012-2016 Master Plan set a goal of 70 percent of instruction provided by full-time faculty. Sadly, CUNY's plans have not been fulfilled. More full-time faculty have been hired over the past 15 years, but the decline in per-student public funding for CUNY in combination with the growth in full-time equivalent enrollment has prevented CUNY from hiring full-time faculty at a rate that could keep up with enrollment growth. University-wide, the number of full-time faculty increased by 36 percent from 2000 – 2015, but the number of full-time equivalent students, a measure of how many students are in the classroom, increased by 46 percent over the same period.⁴⁴

The proportion of full-time instruction remains maddeningly low and has actually fallen in the last 10 years. CUNY-wide in 2005-2006, 50.6 percent of undergraduate instruction was provided by full-time faculty.⁴⁵ By 2015-2016, only 47 percent of undergraduate instruction was provided by full-time faculty. That number was as low as 35 percent for individual colleges, including John Jay College and College of Staten Island; at Hunter College the number is at 36 percent.⁴⁶

Years of salary stagnation have also undermined CUNY's efforts to rebuild its full-time faculty. Uncompetitive salaries make it difficult for the University to hire and retain faculty. The average associate professor at CUNY earns \$91.5K per year, less than their equally ranked colleagues at the University of Connecticut (\$99.7K), SUNY Stony Brook (\$101.8K), University of Delaware (\$102.8K), Montclair State University in New Jersey (\$98.7K), and many other comparable institutions with which CUNY competes in the academic labor market.⁴⁷

Faculty and staff at the University will receive their first raise in almost seven years in January 2017. It will barely cover seven years of inflation. Consequently, these increases will not fill the salary gap between CUNY and competitor colleges in the region. CUNY will remain relatively uncompetitive and will continue to face challenges in attracting and retaining the complement of full-time faculty its students need until salaries are significantly increased.

⁴⁴ University-wide, the number of full-time faculty increased from 5,566 FT Faculty in 2000 to 7,580 FT faculty in 2015. Full-time equivalent enrollment over the same period increased from 139,736 in 2000 to 203,529 in 2015.

⁴⁵ [University Performance Management Process 2008-09 Year-End Report](#). Objective 2, Pg 5. CUNY Office of Institutional Research. 30 July 2009.

⁴⁶ [Performance Management Process Data Book, Final 2015-16 Year-End University Report](#). Goal A.1, Pg 2. CUNY Office of Institutional Research. 29 July 2016.

⁴⁷ Average CUNY salary derived from CUNY personnel records (CUNYfirst) for Spring 2014. Average salaries for faculty at other institutions come from the [2015-16 Faculty Compensation Survey](#), American Association of University Professors. (Recently negotiated salary increases with retroactive pay would raise that average at CUNY by 4.6% to \$95.7K for Spring 2014.)

For CUNY students to reach their full academic potential, they need greater access to full-time faculty. The University's ability to recruit and retain full-time faculty depends on far greater support from Albany and City Hall.

- To create the full-time faculty cohort that CUNY students deserve and need, the City and State must provide funding necessary to provide competitive salaries.
- City and State funding must be allocated to increase full-time faculty hiring dramatically. The first step should be an immediate investment by the City and State in establishing 1,000 new full-time faculty lines. CUNY could then begin to provide its students with the attention and support they need. Class sizes could be reduced, essential courses offered in a timely manner, and faculty workloads restructured to yield significantly more time for student mentorship and faculty research. Adding 1,000 new full-time faculty lines would require a net increase to CUNY's funding of roughly \$81 million dollars per year.⁴⁸
- Over the next five years, faculty hiring should be fully aligned with enrollment growth, so that a more academically appropriate 70 percent of instruction is provided by full-time faculty. At the Fall 2016 enrollment level, 4,000 new full-time faculty are required to reach that goal. Adding 4,000 new full-time faculty lines would require a net increase in CUNY's funding of roughly \$325 million dollars per year.⁴⁹

Adjunct Exploitation

The decline of City and State per-student funding at CUNY was accompanied by increased hiring of less-expensive, part-time faculty required for an expanded student body and a diminished full-time faculty cohort. This trend was a direct consequence of policy choices, which starved CUNY of public funds, and in turn, demanded that it restructure its instructional labor force to wring savings from its budget. It is on this basis that the low-wage adjunct faculty workforce

⁴⁸ Estimate assumes 75 percent of new hires will be assistant professors and 25 percent will be lecturers. Fringe benefits for the new hires cost an additional 30% of salary. The estimated weighted average cost of each blended assistant professor/lecturer faculty line would amount to \$104,203 per full-time faculty line. The cost to CUNY per full-time faculty line would be reduced by \$23,046 for courses no longer taught by adjuncts. Thus, the net increased cost to CUNY per each full-time faculty line would therefore be \$81,157.

⁴⁹ Calculated using the net blended assistant professor/lecturer faculty line rate of \$70,409.

now numbers over 12,000. The number of adjunct faculty increased 73 percent from 2000-2015.⁵⁰

Adjuncts receive salaries of about \$3,500 per three-credit course and are hired on a per-course basis. Progress has been made by the union representing CUNY faculty and professional staff (Professional Staff Congress/CUNY) in providing cohorts of long-serving adjuncts with increased job security and more stable health insurance. But much more needs to be done.

Adjuncts are generally treated as disposable workers allowing CUNY to have a flexible workforce, who are hired when enrollment rises and released when enrollment declines. Adjunct faculty were once relatively few in number at CUNY and typically taught highly specialized courses otherwise unavailable. Today adjuncts have become a permanent workforce; approximately 20 percent of teaching adjuncts have taught two courses per semester for five years or more.⁵¹

Fifty-three percent of all undergraduate CUNY courses are taught by adjuncts.⁵² Across the University, however, individual colleges' reliance on adjuncts varies from a high of 63 percent at the College of Staten Island to a low of 39 percent at Guttman Community College.

Adjuncts are critical to the operation of the University, yet they are systematically exploited in ways that disregard their professionalism and basic economic needs. Their low wages and consequent need to cobble a living together by working at more than one campus leave many adjuncts hard pressed to meet with students after class or engage in campus life outside of the classroom. The office space available for adjuncts to meet with students is often inadequate. In addition, their access to computer labs, libraries and other campus facilities that support research and instruction is generally limited and frustrating. The unacceptable working conditions of adjunct faculty are also the learning conditions of their students.

- Adjunct faculty should have pay and working conditions that are supportive of quality education. The City and State should provide the funding necessary to increase the pay of adjunct faculty immediately and, over time, achieve pay parity between full-time and adjunct faculty. Paying adjuncts a parity salary rate of \$7,000 per course (plus fringe benefits), pegged to the salary of CUNY's full-time lecturers, would cost \$92 million, if 30 percent of CUNY courses are taught by adjuncts.⁵³

⁵⁰ CUNY employed 7,097 adjunct faculty in 2000 and 12,250 adjunct faculty in 2015. For 2000 figure, see [Staff Facts 2003, Table 10.A](#). For 2015 figure, see [Staff Facts 2015, Pg 2](#).

⁵¹ A Professional Staff Congress estimate based on CUNY personnel records (CUNYfirst), spring semester 2015.

⁵² *Performance Management Process Data Book, 2015-16*.

⁵³ Assumes 70,000 course offerings in the fall and spring semesters.

- Full-time teaching positions should be made available to qualified adjunct faculty as investments in new full-time lines are made.
- Adequate office space to meet with students and full access to campus facilities and equipment must be provided to adjuncts.

Support to Aid Retention and Completion

Why do many CUNY students struggle to graduate? As has already been indicated, underfunding of financial aid inhibits progress toward a degree for many students. As well, some students face physical and learning disabilities. Others balance work and family obligations and/or raise children. Still others may enter the University needing to improve their English proficiency. A substantial number of CUNY students enter college with academic deficiencies because they attended underfunded schools in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. Older students may be returning to college after years in the workforce or military service. The challenges CUNY students face are as varied as their backgrounds and communities. Combined with the already cited financial pressures of attending college, even with financial aid, these challenges can slow many students' progress to graduation, or cause them to give up and drop out.

To facilitate students' success and completion and meet their needs both in and out of the classroom, CUNY focusses on special populations via targeted programs. ASAP is the largest and most acclaimed of these programs.

In addition to waived tuition, book vouchers and free MetroCards, ASAP students benefit from a strong complement of support services intended to keep them on pace to graduate. A high-contact, intensive advisement model enables ASAP advisors to maintain ongoing contact with students and take a proactive approach to problem solving. During the first semester, students meet twice a month with an assigned advisor. Advisement meetings continue regularly after that, though less frequently.

For intensive advisement to be possible, caseloads for advisors and counselors are kept to a manageable size. CUNY's goal is to hire one new academic advisor for every 150 new students enrolled in ASAP.⁵⁴ For the rest of CUNY, the ratio is 430 students per advisor. Career-related services and tutoring are also provided to ASAP students. This support structure is a key to ASAP's success.

⁵⁴ *The Connected University: CUNY Master Plan 2016-2020*. Pg 48.

The program's three-year graduation rate is 53 percent as compared to 13.6 percent for full-time, first-time community college students throughout the rest of CUNY and 16 percent at urban community colleges nationwide. Full-time, first-time first-year CUNY students in four-year baccalaureate programs have a six-year graduation rate of 53.9 percent. The national six-year graduation rate for public four colleges is 58.5 percent.

Other targeted student-success programs include the low-cost college preparatory programs CUNY Start for students with remedial needs and CLIP for English language learners.⁵⁵ The State-funded opportunity programs, Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK) at the senior colleges and College Discovery at the community colleges, also promote student success. Both were signed into law in 1966, with a stated mission to "assist capable students who otherwise might not be able to attend college due to their educational or financial circumstances."⁵⁶ There is no single fix that will improve graduation rates for all CUNY students, because students' needs are diverse. Like ASAP, these programs include a mix of student support, and services that provide high levels of individual attention to students through mentorship and academic assistance.

The need for these special programs surpasses their funding and capacity. In the Fall 2014 semester, SEEK and College Discovery, for example, enrolled less than 3,000 freshmen from an applicant pool of almost 28,000.⁵⁷

CUNY also provides low-cost child care to help student-parents balance academics and family. Over 1,600 student-parents and their 2,400 children are served by CUNY's campus child care centers.⁵⁸ But CUNY's 2016 Student Experience Survey found that 12 percent of surveyed CUNY undergraduates are financially supporting children and that 51 percent of those supporting children have children under five years old.⁵⁹ Assuming those percentages are reflective of the entire student body, that would suggest that 29,400 undergraduate students are supporting children, and 15,000 undergraduate students have children of pre-school age.⁶⁰ There is clearly a need for greater investment in child care services.

All CUNY students face challenges to their success beyond cost, and all CUNY students should receive support services they need to help them graduate on time.

⁵⁵ CUNY Start costs \$75 for a 16-week program. CLIP students typically pay \$180 for a 15-week semester. Both programs provide remedial help at a low cost without using up students' financial aid eligibility.

⁵⁶ "[SEEK Overview](#)." *CUNY.edu*. Web. 2 December 2016.

⁵⁷ In Fall 2014, SEEK enrolled a total 8,207 students, including 2,062 freshmen. College Discovery enrolled a total 2,509 students that semester, including 934 freshmen. 27,742 students applied for entry into the two programs. See [Percy Ellis Sutton SEEK Fact Sheet 2014-15](#) and [College Discovery \(CD\) Fact Sheet 2014-15](#), CUNY Office of Special Programs, 3 December 2014.

⁵⁸ "[Student Services. Child Care. About Us](#)." *CUNY.edu*. Web. 28 November 2016.

⁵⁹ [2016 Student Experience Survey](#). CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.

⁶⁰ Calculated using CUNY's Fall 2015 undergraduate headcount enrollment: 245,279.

- The City and State should provide the funding necessary to scale up CUNY's student success programs and increase the number of students who have access. Ultimately, every CUNY student should have such access.
- New academic advisors and counselors need to be hired. The ASAP ratio of 150 students per adviser would require more than 1,360 advisers to serve CUNY's matriculated students. Approximately 800 new hires would be required at a cost of about \$50 million to reach that number.⁶¹
- Funding and facilities for campus-based, low-cost childcare should be expanded. Public Advocate Letitia James has called on the City to increase child-care funding at CUNY from \$500,000 to \$1.53 million.⁶² State funding should be increased as well.

Safe and Modern Learning Environments in Good Repair

After years of disinvestment and delayed maintenance, CUNY desperately needs increased capital funding from the City and State to dramatically improve its campuses state of repair.

Every day on their campuses, CUNY students see the physical evidence of the Albany's and City Hall's neglect. CUNY faculty, staff and students, recently launched the #ReclaimOurSchools infrastructure campaign to highlight desperately needed campus repairs and upgrades. They shared hundreds of photos online of instances of disrepair and dilapidation. They documented drinking fountains with dirty water, broken and leaky ceilings, crumbling walls and stairwells, and more.

Albany and City Hall do not adequately invest in capital funding to repair and rebuild aging facilities or address the critical maintenance needs of CUNY's infrastructure. Likewise, the University operating budget doesn't support a maintenance staff large enough to keep up with day-to-day repairs.

Lack of classroom space and modern science and computer labs is also a problem. CUNY's full-time equivalent enrollment has risen 46 percent in the last 15 years, but college facilities have not been expanded sufficiently to adequately accommodate its enlarged student body. Heavy

⁶¹ A Professional Staff Congress estimate based on CUNY personnel records (CUNYfirst) indicates there were 531 full-time advisers at CUNY in April 2016. They had an average annual salary of \$60,000. Advisor estimate calculated using CUNY's Fall 2015 full-time equivalent students enrollment of 204,414.

⁶² *Policy Brief: Child Care in New York City. The Case for Expanding Childcare at CUNY Community Colleges.* NYC Public Advocate. June 2015.

utilization of facilities in combination with underinvestment in maintenance has accelerated the decline of buildings. This decline is aggravated by significant increases in utilization without comparable investment in maintenance. York College, for example, has seen a 57 percent increase in student enrollment since 2000 without any significant increase in its physical space.⁶³

Albany and City Hall must invest in CUNY's physical plant.

- The City and State should increase capital funding to CUNY to construct more classrooms, labs and other learning spaces.
- Funding for Critical Maintenance must be increased in order to speed up the University's rate of repair and upgrade.
- Adequate staffing levels and resources for campus maintenance must be provided for in the CUNY operating budget. The City and State should fund these costs so day-to-day repairs can be quickly accomplished.

When CUNY Rises New York Rises

The CUNY Rising Alliance is committed to upholding our university's founding mission to educate "the children of the whole people" of New York. The workers, immigrants, students and people of color whom we stand with depend on CUNY for a chance at a better life. Their children depend on CUNY for the same opportunity. Equally important, New York City and State depend on CUNY to power the economy, narrow inequality and help New Yorkers realize their full potential.

But New Yorkers' chance to transform their lives is threatened by years of disinvestment in CUNY's instructional, infrastructural and student-support services. CUNY, a once-free opportunity, is now vastly underfunded and too expensive for many of the New Yorkers we represent.

For CUNY to fulfill its historic obligation to communities across the city, truly paradigm-shifting investments must be made by the City and State. The damage done to CUNY by decades of disinvestment must be repaired. Two billion dollars in new investments must be made in the operating and capital budget of the University over the next five years.

⁶³ [CUNY Five-Year Capital Budget Request 2016-17 through 2020-21, York College.](#)

The CUNY Rising Student Bill of Rights points to a not-distant past when New York made a commitment to fulfill the basic elements of a quality and affordable higher education. Today, it is well past time for the City and State to find the political will to renew their fiscal commitment to a free, high-quality CUNY education.