

DISTRICT OFFICE
718 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NY 11207
TEL: (718) 649-9495
FAX: (718) 649-3111

CITY HALL OFFICE
250 BROADWAY, SUITE 1823
NEW YORK, NY 10007
TEL: (212) 788-6957
FAX: (212) 676-8595



**THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**
INEZ D. BARRON
COUNCIL MEMBER, 42ND DISTRICT, BROOKLYN

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HIGHER EDUCATION

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
EDUCATION
HEALTH
JUVENILE JUSTICE
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May 29, 2014

The Honorable Melissa Mark-Viverito, Speaker
New York City Council
250 Broadway
New York, New York

Dear Speaker Mark-Viverito,

As members of the City Council on Higher Education and members of the City Council, we appeal to you to support and endorse our efforts to improve the academic performance at City University of New York (CUNY) by increasing the number of new full-time faculty and staff.

We applaud Mayor Bill deBlasio's provision of \$18.9 million for the STEM initiative, with \$9.3 million budgeted for personal services, netting 60 full-time positions. The STEM program is targeted to CUNY's community colleges and 2-year programs at the senior colleges. More is needed in order to be able to provide for the quality of instruction that comes from lower student-faculty ratio and increased access to student support services. We know that the 450,000 students who attend CUNY would benefit from improvements such as:

- improved attention and interaction that comes from smaller class size
- increased opportunities for academic advisement
- greater quality of mentoring from academic staff
- increased course availability
- greater opportunity for research

Additionally, the City would benefit from producing a pool of highly qualified workers who could bolster the City's workforce in a range of positions.

Increasing faculty and staff could also be used as a strategy to reduce the disparity in the CUNY faculty, which in no way begins to approach the ethnic composition of the City or of the students in the CUNY system. A concerted, definitive focus could be placed on hiring black and Latino personnel to address the CUNY plan for reducing disparity on the faculty. Professional Staff Congress has suggested an investment of \$10 million could fund the increased hiring and result in approximately 100 new instructional staff lines. When dispersed among the CUNY campuses, this would translate into approximately only three-four new positions at each site.

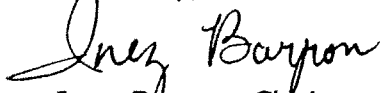
The New York City Council has a history of strongly advocating for and funding programs that benefit CUNY, recognizing its mission, history and accomplishments. The Council's proposed merit-based financial aid program reflects that support of CUNY.

We appeal to the Speaker to approve this proposal for funding as well as consider a \$5 million funding for a need-based financial aid to fill the gaps in the current system of State and federal financial aid.

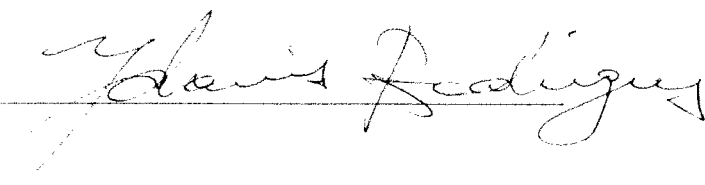
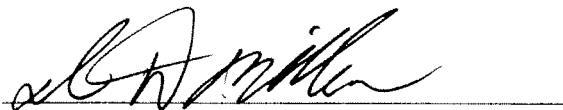
We know that we are at an exciting and historic point in a new progressive city government. We believe that this is an opportunity to have ground-breaking impact on improving the conditions and opportunities for our residents.

We urge you to act favorably on this request for \$10 million for new full-time faculty and staff and \$5 million for need-based financial aid.

Sincerely,



Inez Barron, Chair
Committee on Higher Education



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Mark Treys

Mark Treys

Mark Treys

Mark Treys

GA

MB

Carly A

Angela

Mike

Vanessa R. Tibbo