



NEW YORK CITY NEEDS CUNY AND CUNY NEEDS NEW YORK CITY'S INVESTMENT IN ITS FUTURE

DECEMBER 2022

CUNY'S STUDENTS AND FACULTY NEED THE SUPPORT OF ELECTED OFFICIALS AND OTHER DECISION-MAKERS TO ENSURE THAT OUR STUDENTS RECEIVE A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION. AS WE ENTER THE BUDGET CYCLE AND THE VITAL DISCUSSION OF THE CITY'S PRIORITIES AND VALUES, WE MUST REMEMBER CUNY'S CRITICAL ROLE IN EDUCATION, POVERTY REDUCTION, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

FY 24' CITY BUDGET PRIORITIES

PROFESSIONAL STAFF
CONGRESS/CUNY

REACHING A BOILING POINT

A public institution as diverse as the city itself, a fully funded CUNY will promote racial equity, boost the local economy, and ensure safer, more sustainable communities for the future.

CUNY's proven return on investment has the power to elevate our economy by uplifting workers, communities, and families. We can leverage the resources of CUNY to respond to public health and safety issues while helping address structural economic inequality. To do so, we must invest in the life-changing, wrap-around services that enable students to reconnect to CUNY, stay enrolled, and graduate into family-sustaining employment and productive lives.

A 2021 New York City Comptroller's report found that CUNY graduates contribute \$4.2 billion to the state economy annually. It is fiscally responsible for the city to invest in the university, particularly the community colleges, which rely on city funding to serve the highest need population.

Public higher education works - investing in CUNY is a down-payment on our future.

PSC-CUNY BUDGET PRIORITIES

Comprehensive Student Support and Advising:
Extend successful programs to all students, ensure that all students entering CUNY community colleges achieve their academic goals.

Use ASAP (Accelerated Study in Associate Programs) as a model:

- ASAP provides comprehensive student support and advising (ideally at a ratio of 150 students to 1 advisor), as well as other academic support services, transportation assistance in the form of free Metrocards, and free textbooks. ASAP has been recognized by the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and modeled by other community colleges across the country. ASAP's three-year graduation rate is more than double that of non-ASAP colleges nationwide.
- \$35.5M to hire 264 full time academic advisors (to achieve a ratio of 1:150) and help students persist and graduate.
- Expand the City's successful student MetroCard program to CUNY students.
 - Most students use public transportation. The City has noted that student MetroCards encourage attendance and reduce fare evasion.

ADD FACULTY TO THE SYSTEM AND AVOID FURTHER PEG CUTS:

Austerity budgets have reduced staffing levels across-the-system before, during, and post-COVID. Last year's 3% PEG reduction was met by not rehiring 128 community college faculty positions lost to attrition. Now, CUNY is subject to a mid-year 3% cut that they plan to meet by not bringing back additional community college faculty and staff as well as 4.75% cuts in the out-years. Faculty, staff, and programmatic cuts negatively impact community college students who are primarily students of color and who already have less access to full-time faculty than their white peers. The city must fund faculty lines lost to attrition and refrain from further cuts to CUNY.

EXPAND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

Enduring the trauma caused by the COVID crisis, students must have access to the wrap-around services necessary for success and excellence both in and outside of the classroom.

- CUNY needs \$10M to hire 58 full-time mental health counselors working in-person to bring campuses closer to the recommended ratio of counselors to students.
- CUNY can also help address the shortage of mental health counselors by training them. Mental health providers are reporting turnover rates of 40-50% during the pandemic, and program vacancies at 30%. Workers are leaving the field due to burnout and competition from the private sector, and many on public sector salaries (\$35-60,000) struggle to pay their student loan debts, which average around \$25,000 for clinical degree-holders. Recent investments in mental health services are necessary and positive developments, but they will increase competition for a limited pool of qualified workers, so we must also address the provider shortage.

\$11 MILLION FOR A MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE RETENTION AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

- To expand the initiative announced by Governor Hochul this summer to fund public service loan forgiveness and scholarship programs for mental health professionals, specifically caseworkers, case managers, and clinicians. Public service loan forgiveness will incentivize entry into the workforce pipeline and help retain current workers in the workforce. Students would commit to attend CUNY and work at CUNY for five years for program eligibility.
- \$10M to fund the public service loan forgiveness
- \$1M for new faculty to implement the program across CUNY campuses

SUSTAIN FUNDING FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACCESS AND INCREASE FUNDING FOR CUNY PROGRAMS:

In FY23, the Council allocated significant funding to English language learning for adults and children. This includes \$465,000 in discretionary funds for CUNY programs that support basic literacy and English language skills. The Council should continue this funding and channel more of the total amount allocated to this area to CUNY.

The CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP) meets the needs of students who begin college with language gaps. The classes in this critical program are taught primarily by adjuncts paid poverty wages. Additional funding to support conversion lines is needed to solidify CLIP across the community colleges.