

**Testimony by Chancellor Matthew Goldstein
of The City University of New York
before the New York City Council Higher Education Committee
June 12, 2003**

Good morning, Chairman Charles Barron, and members of the New York City Council Higher Education Committee. I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on The City University of New York's community colleges. I would also like to thank you for your ongoing help with the restorations to CUNY's budget for the community colleges and Medgar Evers College's capital needs, and the Vallone Scholarship Program.

Let me begin by describing the history of under-funding with respect to the community colleges of this University. Since 1991, State and City aid for the community colleges has declined 25% after inflation. This decline in financial support occurred despite the "boom" years of the mid- to late nineties, leaving our community colleges in a disadvantaged position to fulfill their missions.

These reductions were partially offset by increased tuition revenues. However, total funding for the community colleges declined 9% during this period. Peer group analysis conducted by CUNY in recent years shows that most of our peers have experienced increases in overall funding rather than reductions.

Funding losses at CUNY community colleges have led to the following:

- A 9.7% decline in funds expended for instruction. When accounting for increased enrollment during this period, this equates to a 13.4% loss on a per FTE basis. This decline in instruction-related expenditures reflects the fact that the percentage of full-time instruction has been reduced from 54% in 1989 to 43% in 2001. The University has had to rely too heavily on adjunct instructors because of fiscal constraints.
- Reductions in expenditures for academic support services, the majority of which are library-related. This has limited our ability to acquire library materials, particularly at a time when

our peer institutions are making major investments in electronic acquisitions, such as CD-Rom reference materials and online services. In 2002 our community colleges expended only \$16.00 per FTE on library books. This amount compares to \$58.00 per FTE at CUNY's senior colleges.

- Reductions of 13.4% in expenditures related to the maintenance and operation of our facilities have resulted in deferred maintenance of our facilities, adversely impacting students and faculty.

We must provide the necessary instructional environment our students need to succeed, whether in attaining an associate's degree that leads to a fulfilling career, or seamlessly transferring to one of our senior colleges.

Community colleges play a critical role, within the CUNY system and our society in general. Let me now talk a bit about how important it is for our community colleges to strengthen that role, and of course to offer an education of the highest quality for our students. Then I'd like to discuss how this quality education might be financed.

As you know, some students, including high school graduates but not truly prepared to enter college, need developmental education. This has always been part of the community college mission. Other students are looking for the credential that will allow them to work in a particular job, or move into a new position of responsibility. At a community college these students can obtain what they need to earn a living, and can make a decision later as to whether to pursue additional education.

From early on in CUNY's development as a system, the students served by community colleges have tended to be somewhat more "fragile" than senior college students. They tend to require basic skills instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics because of inadequate high school

preparation. They are more likely to require ESL instruction– especially today, with New York's large and growing immigrant population. They tend to be older, with family and work obligations.

These special needs must be met with faculty whose expertise extends beyond a disciplinary area to an understanding of alternative teaching models that enable students to succeed in their academic aspirations. Students must be able to take advantage of this faculty expertise early on and receive assistance in moving efficiently towards the degree.

The recruitment and retention of full-time faculty members is an area of particular concern at our community colleges, and one of our highest priorities. While adjunct faculty represent a necessary and committed segment of the University community, who often bring valuable experience to the classroom, CUNY's excessive dependency on adjuncts negatively impacts the quality of the students' educational experience.

Adjuncts are less easily able to develop on-going relationships with students because they are less available to students outside class hours. They are also less able to participate in professional development programs that are helpful in developing best practices and new pedagogical approaches. In addition, over-reliance on adjunct faculty often makes it difficult to offer regularly the critical courses that students need to make steady progress toward graduation.

Our goal is to have at least 70% of instruction provided by full-time faculty. A few examples will suffice to show how far we are from achieving that goal in key subject areas.

English and Math are the staples of an undergraduate education. At Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) in Fall 2001, only 24% of math instruction was provided by full-time faculty, and only 37% of English instruction. In academic year 2001-2002, at LaGuardia Community College, 45% of math instruction was provided by full-time faculty and only 41% of

English instruction.

The figures for the various science areas, so important in today's world, are problematic as well, and are of particular concern with respect to students moving on to four-year colleges. For example, at BMCC in Fall 2001 only 38% of the instruction in the various science areas (including biology, engineering science, and general science) was provided by full-time faculty.

Given the mission of the community colleges we should be concerned as well about areas such as Basic Educational Skills. At Queensborough Community College, 33% of the instruction in this area in Fall 2002 was provided by full-time faculty.

Aside from full-time faculty, our students also need academic supports— computer labs and computer instruction, library collections, tutoring, and workshops- and other student support services. Community college students at CUNY will not have access to the opportunities they need or deserve unless the University is able to provide a greater number of full-time faculty, whose commitment to community college students is undivided, and increased academic support services.

Beyond the need to ensure a quality education for our community college students is our obligation to see to it that two years of a community college education in an associate degree program is equivalent to the first and second years of education at the senior colleges. How could this otherwise be construed, since transfer of credits is automatically granted when students enter senior colleges at CUNY with a CUNY associate's degree?

We have initiated a study of general education this year to ensure that the liberal arts and sciences curricula at CUNY 's community colleges articulate closely with that of the senior colleges, providing a seamless transition for students transferring and moving from lower to upper division work. This will mean that, for students who aspire to a baccalaureate degree, the path will be as smooth as possible.

We have the strongest commitment to ensuring the quality of the education received by our community college students. But fulfilling this commitment will require resources.

We have a plan that will allow us to generate those resources. CUNY has developed a tuition schedule that will permit us to fulfill the goals of our Master Plan 2000-2004. This plan is primarily intended to provide for improved academic and student support services, and seeks to prevent the difference in tuition between senior and community colleges from growing to the point that the integrated nature of our University is called into question.

The proposal calls for a tuition increase of \$150 per semester for full-time resident students and an increase in the per-credit rate of \$60 for non-resident students. This increase will raise approximately \$25 million in additional revenue for 300 additional full-time faculty and academic and student support services, immediately increasing the percentage of instruction taught by full-time faculty to 55%.

This increase will also reduce somewhat the growing gap between senior and community college tuition. Currently, the difference in tuition levels is \$700 for residents. It will grow to \$1,200 with our proposal. If we do not raise community college tuition, the gap will grow over 100% to \$1,500. (Between 1980 and 1991, tuition was identical for the senior and community colleges. Since then the gap has grown, largely as a result of major reductions in State support for the senior colleges.)

The proposal also calls for the charging of non-resident students on a per-credit basis, and provides for increases in rates that begin to set the tuition level for non-resident students on par with other colleges and universities around the country.

Chairman Barron and Committee members, we deeply appreciate your strong and long-standing support for the University, its educational mission and its fiscal well-being, particularly at our

community colleges. You know that those colleges put tens of thousands of New Yorkers on the road to financial independence and assimilation into society's mainstreamB providing the first step towards a bachelor's degree, and the skills they need for better jobs so they can support themselves and their families. I urge you to continue your support of the University's six community colleges, indispensable as they are to the economic well-being of the City and State, and the strength of our social fabric.

Thank you.