

Testimony for Hearing on New York's 2012-2020 Statewide Plan for Higher Education

Alexandra W. Logue, Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost

The City University of New York

November 29, 2012

Good morning Chancellor Tisch, Commissioner King, and Deputy Commissioner D'Agati. My name is Lexa Logue, Executive vice Chancellor of The City University of New York. We at CUNY are very pleased to be able to speak at today's hearing. We will be speaking in support of New York's 2012-2020 Statewide Plan for Higher Education, and we thank you for this opportunity.

Hurricane Sandy

Before I begin my official testimony, I would like to say something about what so many in our region have been facing during these past few weeks—the devastation wrought by Hurricane Sandy. The City University of New York, CUNY, lost three students and a recent graduate, as well as having huge amounts of flood and wind damage to several of our campuses, not to mention the extensive, and sometimes very long-lasting, power outages. As a University community we have been hard at work to assist those both within and surrounding CUNY in hurricane recovery and relief efforts. In fact, ten of our campuses served as shelters to literally thousands of people, including many hundreds with special medical needs.

I would particularly like to mention the two colleges whose presidents are here on the panel with me today. Both of these presidents showed exemplary leadership in the face of the arduous challenges brought upon their campuses by the natural disaster of Sandy.

Kingsborough Community College, which is beautifully located on the beach in the borough of Brooklyn, suffered extensive water damage. I have seen the very dramatic videos taken at the height of the storm as the ocean and the gale winds washed over Kingsborough's grounds, ripping apart structures as well as landscaping, and flooding lower floors of buildings. However, from the moment the storm ended, the Kingsborough staff, as well as many others, engaged in virtually nonstop clean-up and repair, as well as in providing counseling for the many Kingsborough students and staff who had been adversely affected by the storm. Today, if you tour Kingsborough, you will see virtually no evidence of the storm. In fact, Kingsborough was cleaned up and functioning again just one week after the storm. And through it all, Kingsborough's President Regina Peruggi remained calm, confident, energized, and determined, leading Kingsborough's remarkable recovery.

York College served as one of the ten CUNY shelters, housing almost 1,000 evacuees at any given time, including hundreds with serious medical needs, as well as housing hundreds of volunteers and medical personnel. York had no physical damage and no power outage, and yet it was the last of our colleges to reopen following the storm, due to its classrooms being used to house evacuees. President Marcia Keizs had the daunting task of trying to keep her college community together when she could not be sure how long it would be until the college's physical resources could again be used for classes. Through this entire, extremely difficult, period, she

kept her staff motivated and focused, so that York was able to resume classes in just a few hours after the shelter was consolidated and no longer using York's classrooms.

These are just two examples of the courage and dedication exhibited by the CUNY community following hurricane Sandy. Our efforts to assist those adversely affected by the storm continue under the direction of Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, efforts that are detailed on our website: www.cuny.edu. CUNY's service to the City of New York following the storm is a powerful reminder of the importance of maintaining a strong, vibrant CUNY for its many diverse communities and for its public service mission. We see with our own eyes how great is New York's need for CUNY's faculty, students, and staff, their talents and their energies.

CUNY's 2012-2016 Master Plan: Investing in Our Future

This brings me to the subject of today's hearing: the Statewide Plan for Higher Education and, in particular, CUNY's part of that plan. CUNY's 2012-2016 Master Plan is highly congruent with the Statewide Plan, both of which focus on enhancing the opportunities and services provided by higher education for New York State residents.

CUNY, led by Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, is the nation's leading public urban university. CUNY has 24 colleges and free-standing graduate and professional schools, located in all five boroughs of New York City, and serving 270,000 students in credit-bearing programs as well as another 230,000 in noncredit-bearing programs. We have programs for all levels of student preparation and in a huge variety of fields. We are also the point of connection for the 80 percent of CUNY graduates currently living and working and paying taxes in New York State.

Construction of the Plan

Given the complexity and range of the CUNY system, it was essential that we make extensive efforts to involve all parts of the CUNY community in the construction of our Master Plan.

Therefore, over almost a full calendar year, at all stages of the plan's construction, my office, which was responsible for drafting the plan, consulted extensively with every campus and with a wide variety of university-wide representative bodies, including the University Faculty Senate and the University Student Senate. This consultation ranged from solicitation of ideas for the first draft of the plan to the seeking of comments on the penultimate draft. In addition, we sought the comments of an external reviewer, Dr. Brit Kirwan, Chancellor of the Maryland System. Revisions in the plan were repeatedly made in response to all of the comments that we received.

The Four Parts of CUNY's Mission and Master Plan

CUNY's Master Plan is organized around the four parts of our mission that derive from New York State's Education Law's description of CUNY's mission and purpose: (1) promoting academic excellence, (2) maintaining the university as an integrated system and facilitating articulation, (3) expansion of access, and (4) responsiveness to the needs of the university's urban setting.

I would like to give some specifics about each of these four parts of the plan, and then say a bit about some themes that carry across the entire plan.

The first part of the Master Plan is academic excellence. CUNY has seen a steady rise in student demand over the past decade, and entering student achievement has also increased. In fall 2011, the University accepted more than 20,000 applicants with a high school average of 85 or above, a 7.8 percent increase in top applicants from fall 2010. In 2011, we were also pleased to see CUNY students distinguish themselves nationally, with two winning Truman scholarships, four garnering Goldwater scholarships, three receiving National Science Foundation graduate research fellowships, and two winning \$100,000 Math for America fellowships, as just a few examples.

I am also proud to note that CUNY's faculty continue to be recognized for their innovative research efforts. Grants from the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Institutes of Health, the Gates Foundation, and the United States Department of Education, and a great many others are advancing the work of CUNY researchers across our senior and community colleges. A \$20 million federal grant—the only one received in New York State—is enabling CUNY to assist out-of-work adult New Yorkers who are changing careers.

However, despite these gains and accomplishments, CUNY has been losing ground in providing instruction from full-time faculty. Research has shown that student success significantly depends on the presence of full-time faculty. Unfortunately, as demonstrated in the Master Plan, CUNY's student enrollment has been growing faster than its full-time faculty so that now only 46 percent of instruction is by full-time faculty. Therefore a significant goal for CUNY during the period of this Master Plan is to grow and cultivate our world-class full-time faculty.

The second part of the Master Plan is maintaining the university as an integrated system and facilitating articulation. These are challenging goals for CUNY because we evolved as a set of independent colleges, and because our students transfer a great deal among our colleges. Over 50 percent of the graduates of each of our senior (baccalaureate) colleges are transfer students, and each fall approximately 10,000 of our students transfer from one CUNY college to another. Yet, for at least the past 40 years, a student transferring from one of our colleges to another had his or her courses evaluated for transfer according to whether the courses “matched” courses at the receiving institution, as judged sometimes by a single individual at the new institution. Frequently, students have been given only elective credit for general education or major courses the student had taken at the sending college, or students were given no credit at all, resulting in students having to repeat courses or take extra courses, delaying or even discouraging graduation, and costing the University and New York State much extra funds. This second part of CUNY’s Master Plan includes details on CUNY’s Pathways initiative, which directly addresses these and other student transfer issues. For example, beginning in fall 2013, all CUNY undergraduate colleges will offer a common general education framework constructed by a faculty committee, and with the particular courses chosen by the usual campus faculty governance procedures. The Pathways initiative will allow students to transfer seamlessly, without loss of any type of credit.

The third part of the CUNY Master Plan includes preparing high school students for college success. This topic will be addressed in detail by my colleague President Peruggi. For now, let me just say that this topic, as detailed in the Master Plan, is part of the story of CUNY’s growing

enrollment. The story is one that we have called “The Tale of Two Tails.” We are enrolling more high-achieving students—a tail at one end of the preparedness spectrum—as well as a growing number of underprepared students, a tail at the other end. Today, approximately eight out of 10 students who come to our community colleges from the New York City public schools need some remediation, and CUNY expends approximately \$30 million per year on remediation, funds that could otherwise be used for college-level programs and services if students arrived at CUNY better prepared to do college-level work. CUNY, working with the New York City Department of Education, addresses the wide range of students’ needs through a number of carefully developed academic programs. However, meeting the needs of students who are at very different levels of readiness is a challenge, both academically and financially. Although some students may be seeking independent advanced research opportunities, for example, others may need highly supportive academic programs including intensive advisement.

The fourth part of CUNY’s Master Plan is responsiveness to the needs of the university’s urban setting. I have already spoken to this point in discussing the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, something unanticipated when we wrote the Master Plan last spring. However, although the specifics of how CUNY would assist the community in the period of the Master Plan were unanticipated at the time that the Master Plan was written, the concept that CUNY would assist the community significantly was not. In fact, part four of CUNY’s Master Plan includes a description of CUNY’s work with New York City’s Office of Emergency Management in developing a Coastal Storm Plan for the establishment of evacuation centers in the event of a severe storm, including the preparation of volunteers to manage the shelters. We had no idea, when we wrote that, how relevant that section was going to become. Going forward, CUNY will

continue to provide support to the Regional Catastrophic Training Consortium (involving New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut) by developing materials used by the regional jurisdictions to train response teams in their roles and responsibilities in the event of an evacuation such as we saw with Sandy, as well as providing many other essential services to New York City and State.

Overall Themes in CUNY's Master Plan

I would also like to mention two important themes that carry across all of CUNY's Master Plan.

First, unlike any previous CUNY master plans, this one covers a future period of financial stability for CUNY. The planned tuition increases that the CUNY Board of Trustees has already approved through Fiscal Year 2015, and the maintenance of effort provision included in the 2011 State higher education agreement, provide for a stable funding condition and prevent reductions in state support. This allows CUNY to plan for the future in ways never before possible. All of us at CUNY deeply appreciate the support of the Governor, the State Senate, and the State Assembly for a tuition policy that enables New York's families to better plan for the costs of college, encourages students to advance their education, and enhances the University's ability to plan for the future, such as the planned increases in full-time faculty described in the Master Plan.

The second overall theme of CUNY's Master Plan that I should mention is CUNY's ongoing reliance on rigorous data as a guide to our policies and decisions—using such data and, where there are insufficient existing data, generating such data. We are appropriately evaluative in assessing the existing evidence for guiding our funding allocations and policies. In addition,

CUNY has been conducting a wide variety of quasi-experimental and experimental research on some of the most pressing aspects of student success, with this research funded by organizations such as the Helmsley Foundation, the Gates Foundation, and the Spencer Foundation. CUNY has become a national model for such work, conducting some of the largest—and most useful—randomized assignment controlled experiments in higher education.

Conclusion

I hope that this testimony provides you with an overview of CUNY's 2012-2016 Master Plan, constructed under the direction of Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, who provided spectacular leadership and guidance for this project.

Chancellor Tisch, Commissioner King, and Deputy Commissioner D'Agati, let me thank you again for your continued efforts to strengthen higher education in New York, and for the opportunity to testify in front of you today. We will continue to take advantage of every opportunity to work together with you in enhancing education in New York State.

You will now hear from two of our college presidents, York College President Marcia Keizs, and Kingsborough Community College President Regina Peruggi, who will each detail some of the aspects of CUNY's Master Plan that are particularly emphasized by New York State's Statewide Plan for Higher Education.