“Open the doors to all ... Let the children of the rich and the poor take their seats together and know of no distinction save that of industry, good conduct, and intellect.”

Townsend Harris, Founder, The Free Academy, (CUNY’s founding institution), 1847

THE SEARCH

The City University of New York (CUNY) seeks in its next Chancellor a leader who can partner with its 24 college presidents and deans, execute on system wide plans to graduate more New Yorkers, position CUNY graduates for successful careers in high value work, and build and broadcast the academic innovation and excellence of CUNY and its faculty to the City, the State, and the nation.

The Chancellor heads the CUNY system, reporting to a 17-member Board of Trustees. With an operating budget of $3.5B, CUNY serves over 270,000 students in credit-bearing programs, and 268,000 adult and continuing education (non-credit) course enrollments. It conferred approximately 51,500 degrees in 2016-2017 and since 1969, has conferred over 1.3 million degrees, across a system of eleven senior colleges, seven community colleges, five graduate and professional schools, and an honors college, dispersed across the five boroughs of New York City. It is served by 7,300 tenure track faculty and 11,500 non-tenure track or adjunct faculty and over 25,000 staff. Its total degree-credit enrollment grows at an average annual rate of 2.5 percent per year in approximately 1,400 active academic programs.

To provide a high quality, accessible education to all New Yorkers, regardless of background, creating a powerful vehicle for social mobility.

–CUNY Mission Statement

CUNY has evolved a remarkable mission, true to its founding heritage, its history as an academically distinguished university, and its profound commitment to open its doors to every New Yorker. It is a unique form of a public urban university, a fusion of the best principles of academic rigor and excellence with a fundamental commitment to maximizing opportunity, particularly those from low-income, underrepresented groups and immigrant communities. For 170 years, it has lifted generations of families and educated millions of people. A 2017 study, conducted by Stanford University economist Raj Chetty, showed that CUNY propels almost six times as many low-income students
into the middle class and beyond as all eight Ivy League colleges—plus Duke, M.I.T., Stanford, and Chicago combined. It is a noble, worthy, and just creation, deeply embedded in the history of this City. True to its promise, students graduate CUNY with little or no debt. The New York State governor’s commitment to equal access enables 70 percent of CUNY students to pay no tuition. The economic promise of CUNY is singular and made to a remarkably diverse student population, unrivaled by any other institution of its size in the country. There simply is no majority group: Black students account for 25 percent of the student body, Hispanic students 30 percent, Asians 20 percent, and whites 24 percent. The student body hails from 211 territories and countries of origin and collectively speaks 174 languages. Forty percent of students speak a native language other than English, 45 percent are first-generation college students, and 58 percent are Pell grant recipients.

CUNY represents New York, arguably the most cosmopolitan city in the world and among the most successful. For a generation, New York has been a magnet for people and business. At 8.6 million people, today’s NYC has a larger population than at any time in its history. Since the economic nadir of 1974, the City has built one of the strongest economies in the country and its prosperity continues to be crucial to the future of the entire country.

At the heart of New York is CUNY. Its efforts are woven into every part of the City’s economy and the very life of both New York City and New York State. CUNY colleges serve 58 percent of undergraduate students in New York City and nearly half (46 percent) of all students attending a New York City college (fall 2013 enrollment figures). The University accounts for more than a third of the business and finance degrees awarded by New York City institutions, about one-third of the city’s public school teachers, and a high percentage of the nurses and health and science technicians employed by local medical facilities. Eighty percent of CUNY graduates were still in the New York City metropolitan region 10 years after graduation. Today, New York ranks third among the ten largest US cities, behind San Jose and Philadelphia, in the percentage of its college-age population who attend college.

CUNY has benefited greatly from funding support from the State and the City of New York. State and City contributions comprise 65 percent of its $3.5B operating budget, with the remainder derived from research grants and philanthropic revenue sources as well as tuition dollars. Only a handful of public universities anywhere enjoy such support. Governor Andrew Cuomo’s Excelsior, free-tuition program, announced in 2017, is an impressive declaration of NY State’s commitment to public higher education. The graduates of CUNY have the opportunity to emerge in a world class economy, with the skills learned in great research universities, at an entirely affordable tuition, and with the strong support of the public and public officials. At a moment of increased urgency for higher education, when a college diploma has become an indispensable ticket to the middle class, the next Chancellor has the opportunity to alter the educational profile and life trajectory of an entire city.
Isaacson, Miller has been retained to assist in this recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE NEXT CHANCELLOR OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

The next chancellor will inherit a great university, aimed in the right direction and powered by a grand ambition. The overarching challenge for the next chancellor is to build on the university’s momentum and to re-define CUNY in the public imagination as a new kind of university, combining uncompromising academic excellence with a fundamental commitment to inclusion, opportunity, and student success.

**Advance the promise of CUNY in a complex political environment**

The next Chancellor needs to inspire CUNY: the staff, the students, the faculty, and the public. “CUNY needs someone fluent in the mission before they come here, who is graceful without a script, who knows who we are and why we are important, who does not have to be coached, someone for whom the mission is innate.” –A CUNY president

CUNY is the promise made by New York City and New York State to the working and middle classes of New York, especially immigrants and people of color, that they will have an authentic and navigable pathway to a successful middle class life.

The system needs a strong leader, with an effective public persona, who can make the promise real and tell the story of hope and success, who can explain to the people of the City and the State and to all their elected representatives why CUNY is the essential institution for New York.

CUNY operates in a complex political environment. The Chancellor must navigate its waters and sometimes turn its tide. The faculty chooses to teach CUNY’s students. They want to have faith in their Chancellor. The State and City, separately and together, are eager to hear of CUNY success. The next Chancellor has the opportunity to create the next, transformative chapter in CUNY’s history and must effectively tell CUNY’s story to its many audiences.

**Student Success**

In CUNY’s next chapter, research excellence and academic rigor will be joined by an equally powerful theme: student success. In the last chapter, the leadership re-established CUNY’s academic reputation. In this chapter, CUNY must dramatically improve retention and graduation rates, in both the senior and community colleges. The system has pioneered excellent work in Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP)—a community college based student success program, remediation reform in the community colleges, Pathways—a transfer system between all CUNY institutions, and in
Experiential learning that links students’ academics to their careers. There are pilots for each innovation, sometimes several. ASAP, with generous City funding has gone to scale at 25,000 students, one in four community college freshmen.

These four efforts each require fundamental systems change. Each program will change every campus’ culture, budget, and organizational structure and the day to day behavior of faculty, staff, and students. Every campus has taken stock and has launched initiatives. In each case, CUNY runs directly into the issues posed by a system that is, at the same time, both integrated and federated. Adoption is largely voluntary and constrained by limits in new funding and by the campus’ capacity to re-organize work patterns and re-allocate its base budget.

The outlines for success are clear, pioneered at CUNY and other analogous settings across the country. The next Chancellor will manage a transformative, systemic change process, in a dispersed, decentralized, and strongly federated environment.

**The essential research and scholarly enterprise: Sustaining the drive for new knowledge and the value of a CUNY degree**

In the last chapter of its narrative, CUNY spent enormous energy to establish its academic position, to anchor its work in distinguished scholarship, to gain public credibility and to restore faith in the value of a CUNY degree. It succeeded admirably.

CUNY faculty are recruited with the promise of a scholarly career. CUNY students will graduate into a competitive economy. CUNY promises them that with their degree, they can move from marginal employment to the mainstream. The value proposition, for both faculty and students depends on CUNY’s academic reputation.

CUNY cannot retreat from its commitment to scholarship and academic rigor. The Chancellor must be steadfast in her or his support of presidents and deans in their work with faculty to promote outstanding research, elevate standards of scholarly excellence, and spur innovation within the curriculum. CUNY’s leadership must champion faculty in their seeking externally funded research and pursuing multidisciplinary research efforts. Remaining inclusive of the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, while driving innovation within STEM and business fields, the Chancellor will inspire appreciation of diverse intellectual traditions within CUNY. She or he will also insist that high priority be given to faculty development – encouraging campus leaders to invest in all CUNY faculty as individuals as well as in their scholarly endeavors and participation in the relevant affairs of their discipline.

**Diversify the student body, faculty, and staff**

CUNY has arguably the most diverse student body in the country. It has significant faculty and staff diversity. It works hard to welcome its students, staff, and faculty and make CUNY the natural home for all its constituencies. Diversity is essential to its mission. The broad community and the contemporary student community believe in the
University. It is their hope. They expect to feel safe and welcomed. To succeed, at its very best, CUNY will need a consistently diverse faculty, staff, and leadership. The next Chancellor will be expected to focus resolutely on recruitment, retention, and university culture.

Serving the State and the City: The Budget: Operating and Capital

CUNY is the beneficiary of extraordinary support from the City and the State. As a result, it is highly dependent on direct appropriation and on New York State tuition assistance. The Chancellor always leads the system’s fiscal relationship to the City and the State. She or he will need to be a consummate bridge-builder, strengthening and expanding connections to community organizations and New York’s business and industrial communities to address employer needs and, in turn, seek their support. The Chancellor will sustain corporate and civic partnerships throughout the City and State, laying the groundwork for sustained mutual benefit between CUNY and a cadre of influencers and policy-makers.

Success depends on serving State and City missions, achieving programmatic success and representing CUNY, consistently, and broadly with the elected and appointed officials, at every level, who allocate state and city budgets. The budget contains the mission and the Chancellor leads the mission and secures CUNY’s public support.

The management agenda: Organizing for success

CUNY is both an integrated and a federated system and the most public of all public universities, subject to scrutiny and organized for public transparency.

CUNY’s management structure has grown organically, responding to new functional demands, adapting, in each administration to shifts in policy and program. It was rarely the product of deliberate organizational design.

In its integrated role, it controls most administrative functions, sometimes in minute detail and with some systems that are manual or manual in origin. It provides shared services through a unified data base, a single financial system and a single center for research support. It has the potential for additional shared services that can greatly aid the colleges.

In its federated role, CUNY creates excellent pilot programs and encourages their adoption, college by college. Shared innovation, across the system and with the presidents and their colleges has produced impressive results, in academic improvement and student success.

All parties agree that CUNY needs a large scale, organizational design project, aligning authorities and organizational units around these twin themes, recognizing the vast range of institutions and the need for adaptation, making central services more efficient and
bringing large scale, student and academic success innovation to scale across the system while adapting to the widely divergent needs of each campus.

**Gain investment dollars and stretch public dollars through improved efficiency and new entrepreneurial activity**

Major universities around the country have focused carefully on shared services, large, efficient data systems, new purchasing and supply chain arrangements, the efficient use of real estate and improved benefits administration to gain crucial new dollars for academic investment. CUNY is no exception. Much good work has been done, but in a $3.5 billion dollar system with many disparate parts and a long history of independent activity, the opportunities are substantial. A new chancellor will lead an administration that can reengineer business practices and produce substantial operating efficiencies.

**Deferred maintenance and the capital budget**

CUNY has substantial deferred maintenance and a considerable waiting list for new buildings. Campus restoration and renovation are critical for effective teaching and research and are always essential to morale. Students want to believe that they attend a great university that looks like a great university.

CUNY competes with many state capital budget commitments. The University gets a modest capital budget each year, in the range of $300 million. It needs to maximize its use, invent new, innovative combinations of private philanthropy, public finance, and private capital to deliver the facilities that sustain the promise.

**Invest in philanthropy and build the development program at CUNY**

CUNY has historically raised modest sums of money, in most cases, at the level of each college, through allied college foundations that appeal to CUNY’s very successful alumni bodies. It has conducted one substantial capital campaign but does not have a highly developed, central fundraising operation that coordinates readily with its federated colleges. CUNY will need a new development effort and may benefit from a new campaign. New York is at the heart of development activity for every great university and no university is more crucial to the future of New York. CUNY has, from time to time and place to place, had remarkable success with philanthropy. It has great potential for growth.

**QUALIFICATIONS**

The Search Committee understands that no single candidate will have all the ideal qualifications, but CUNY seeks a chancellor with the following professional experiences and personal qualities:
• An excellent record as an outstanding leader, manager within a major higher education system or other analogous large organization.

• Strong political skills and the ability to work effectively with state and local elected officials. Knowledge of New York State and City is an advantage but is not required.

• A fundamental commitment to diversity, across all communities of New York City and State, and in every aspect of university administration.

• Proven record or demonstrated skills to be an innovator and fundraiser.

• Intellectual depth; a global and interdisciplinary thinker, attuned to the scholarly missions of a great university.

• An appetite for leadership in a high-energy, complex environment. And a bias toward decisive action.

• Integrity of the highest order; self-confidence without self-importance.

• A record of building excellent administrative and academic leadership teams and organizing complex systems around core missions.

NOMINATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

A 14-member search committee composed of trustees, college presidents, faculty, students, and alumni is conducting this search. Isaacson, Miller is assisting the search committee with the recruitment. All nominations, applications, and inquiries will be held in strict confidence.

Applications, including a résumé/CV, and letter of interest, should be sent electronically to:

John Isaacson, Monroe “Bud” Moseley, or Lionel Anderson
Isaacson, Miller
263 Summer Street, 7th Floor
Boston, MA 02210
617-262-6500
http://www.imsearch.com/6534
and
ChancellorSearch@CUNY.edu

CUNY is an EO/AA/IRCA/ADA employer with a strong commitment to racial, cultural and ethnic diversity. The Search Committee actively seeks and encourages nominations and applications from men and women of all races.
APPENDIX: THE CONTEXT:
CUNY HISTORY AND CUNY TODAY

HISTORY AND MISSION

CUNY’s life began in 1847, as the “Free Academy,” launched by idealistic reformers committed to a meritocracy of talents and eager to serve the commercial metropolis that had suddenly emerged in New York City in the mid-19th century. The Free Academy morphed eventually into City College. In 1870, the City launched The Female Normal and High School which educated women to become teachers, which in turn became Hunter College. Each college grew, gained public support and then, as the city grew, developed branch campuses in the rapidly expanding boroughs. They, in turn, became Brooklyn, Queens, and Lehman Colleges. In the 1930’s, the colleges opened Schools of General Studies where tuition-paying students worked to earn “night school” degrees or to raise their grades and achieve admission to the highly selective but free “day” baccalaureate programs. The postwar era led to another burst of enrollment, and by the mid-1950’s, the first community college was organized on Staten Island.

The “Municipal Colleges” developed as New York’s response to elite and prestigious privates and to distant, public flagships. In the first half of the 20th century, New York was home to a burgeoning population of immigrants. They shared a common thirst for education and the city responded with an extraordinary public school system and with a slowly expanding system of free colleges. College educations were rare in every part of America, and New York was no exception. College served the few – in this case, the aspiring few. The Municipal Colleges emerged as elite institutions, proud of their selectivity, their demanding intellectual standards, the productivity of their faculty, and the success of their graduates. As of 1998, there were, cumulatively, more corporate CEOs who graduated from CUNY colleges than from any other university in the country. Among public universities in the United States, CUNY accumulated one of the largest cohorts of Nobel Prize laureates. In its early days CUNY was, by any metric, a great, but relatively small system.

Beginning in the 1920’s, the Colleges were coordinated by a Board of Higher Education but operated separately. That spirit of independence of some of the earlier colleges in the system persists today, giving the system a federated character.

In 1961, Governor Nelson Rockefeller and the New York State Legislature, in concert with the city, pulled the colleges together into the single university CUNY is known as today – an integrated system of senior and community colleges, graduate and professional schools, research centers, institutes and consortia – and made clear that they were open to all races, genders, and creeds. It was a time of both great change and great aspiration. Nelson Rockefeller was governor; Robert Wagner and then John Lindsay were New York City mayors. The city’s economy and demographics had altered fundamentally and, in a turbulent time, the government responded. By the late 1960’s, African-American and Hispanic students were a majority in the high schools and many
second and third generation New Yorkers of European descent had left the boroughs for the suburbs. To respond to the growing demand for higher education, the new CUNY, with city and state support, rapidly added community colleges to the system and built the faculty, reaching an all-time high of 11,000 full time faculty members by the early 1970’s.

In 1969-70, CUNY took dramatic action. Responding to civil rights activism and to the changing demographics of the city, the Trustees approved a system of open admissions. This guaranteed admission to a senior college to any student with an 80 average or who graduated in the top 50 percent of their graduating class. Enrollment in the senior colleges jumped from 20,000 to 35,000 students in one year (1969 to 1970) with a marked increase in diversity. Open admissions created unprecedented opportunity for New Yorkers to attend a four-year college at no cost, but the faculty and administration struggled to adapt. Timing made their difficulties considerably worse. In 1975, the City famously flirted with bankruptcy. The rescue during the Beame administration, overseen by a State-imposed Emergency Financial Control Board and Municipal Assistance Corporation, required drastic cuts at CUNY and other public agencies. The number of full time faculty fell to 5,600 while the student body grew.

Many students were ill-prepared for rigorous work in what had been elite colleges. The system staggered, attempting with reduced faculty to provide remediation. Student success metrics plummeted and the public lost faith. In the post-rescue phase of New York’s history, CUNY acquired a relatively low status in the public budgeting process.

In the 1990’s, Mayor Rudy Giuliani made CUNY’s difficulties a high profile public issue. He appointed a Mayor’s Task Force on CUNY. In June 1999, the task force produced their report, The City University of New York: An Institution Adrift. It documented the decline of the system in vivid detail and provided a plan now, in retrospect, widely seen as the blueprint of the last twenty years of academic revival.

CUNY TODAY

Today’s CUNY is a research intensive, urban university providing postsecondary education at every level, from certificate programs through doctoral-degree study, and in a huge variety of fields of interest, as well as programs linking secondary and postsecondary education, at significant scale and scope.

The university has drawn liberally on its heritage and executed faithfully in practice. It has helped to redefine the purposes of a successful, public, urban university. CUNY is large enough, ambitious enough, and inclusive enough to raise the educational attainment of the entire City of New York, while continuing to serve suburban, regional, and international students.
GOVERNANCE

Despite its name and the location of its schools, CUNY is largely a creature of New York State law. It is governed by a seventeen-member Board of Trustees, ten of whom are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the New York State Senate, and five of whom are appointed by the Mayor of New York City with the advice and consent of the Senate. One ex-officio trustee is the chairperson of the university student senate, and one ex-officio non-voting trustee is the chairperson of the university faculty senate. The chair and vice-chair of the Board are appointed by the Governor.

The Board appoints a Chancellor to serve as CUNY’s chief executive, educational, and administrative officer.

FINANCES

The University’s annual operating budget is approximately $3.5 billion. Public supports from the State of New York and City of New York, along with tuition revenue are the three main funding sources of the operating budget. Currently, the State of New York accounts for 65 percent of CUNY’s operating budget (including the State’s support for the Tuition Assistance Program). State funding supports the senior, four year colleges. The City provides 12 percent and funds the community colleges. Tuition revenue paid directly by students supports 22 percent. The remaining 13 percent comes from scholarships and waivers (5 percent) and federal financial aid (8 percent).

CUNY has a stable operating budget. The Governor’s proposed financial plan for the Fiscal Year beginning on July 1, 2018 (Fiscal Year 2019), if adopted, would add almost $70 million in new resources for CUNY’s senior colleges. New York State’s Excelsior program will aid in increasing enrollment and thereby enhance total tuition revenue. The City’s financial plan will provide an additional $40 million to support the University’s community colleges. The campuses operate in a highly centralized system of state, local and central office rules that govern human resources, procurement, capital allocation and new program authorization but the campuses have considerable local autonomy to manage their own budgets and to build improved revenue within approved program offerings.

CUNY is both an integrated and federated system and its rule structure reflects the bifurcated nature of the organization. It strongly encourages local initiative and entrepreneurship but strictly controls a wide variety of rule structures.

To create new funds for innovation, the system launched a four year “Administrative Excellence Initiative”, intended to redirect $75 million of administrative resources to instructional and student support activities.

CUNY can educate New York because it keeps tuition low. Today, full year tuition at the senior colleges is $6,530, roughly half the price of most New England publics and
one third less than a comparable SUNY institution. Community college tuition is $4,800, roughly $1,000 less than comparable institutions in the Northeast. By combining New York State’s generous Tuition Assistance Program with Pell grants and the Excelsior program, approximately seven out of 10 CUNY undergraduates attend tuition-free. Only 14.2 percent of baccalaureate students and 7 percent of full-time CUNY community college students take out federal loans and their loans are significantly smaller than their counterparts at comparable institutions. CUNY remains one of the great bargains in America.

While the University remains incredibly affordable, the Predictable Tuition Policy – which was approved by State legislation in June 2016 – will provide authority for tuition increases of up to $200 per year for four years. This will enable the senior colleges to better construct multi-year financial plans while allowing students and their families to plan for these modest and predictable increases. Enrollment trends at the University have remained very stable, and overall increased about 1 percent in the current academic year.

The University has received unmodified, or “clean”, opinions on its Financial Statements from its external auditing firm for the past several years.

**FACULTY**

CUNY’s faculty are both dedicated scholars and extraordinary teachers. They choose CUNY explicitly. They commit to CUNY’s mission of access and success in a rigorous education for CUNY’s highly diverse student population. They include many distinguished scholars including members of the National Academies, MacArthur, National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize winners, and 134 Distinguished Professors. Forty nine and two tenths of a percent of CUNY’s full time faculty are female and 35.3 percent are from federally protected groups. Faculty diversity is a high priority at CUNY, as evidenced by a 10 percent increase in the percentage of new hires from federally protected groups between 2010-11 and 2016-2017 (from 32.4 percent to 43.8 percent). Recent increases in faculty pay, a reduction in teaching workload, and enhancements in research resources continue to widen this pool of talented candidates.

The Professional Staff Congress (PSC) is the union that represents both the full-time and adjunct faculty and some staff. The union negotiates, administers, and enforces collective bargaining agreements, protects the rights of staff through the grievance and arbitration process, and engages in political activity on behalf of CUNY and its staff. It also provides a variety of benefits and services to its members through its affiliations with the PSC/CUNY Welfare fund and the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT).

**RESEARCH**

CUNY has a proud tradition of excellence in basic and applied research. Scholarly and creative productivity are important criteria for the hiring, tenure and promotion of CUNY faculty. Each year, CUNY faculty produce roughly 20,000 original scholarly and creative
products, including over 4,000 peer-reviewed journal articles and authored books, and over 40 patents. These products are supported by over $140M annually in sponsored awards to support research, as well as $8-10M annually from New York State geared to the equipment and projects of junior faculty. Research funding and productivity have seen yearly gains as a result of a 15-year dedicated investment in CUNY research. Highlights of this investment include nearly $2B in funding for research infrastructure and scientific research facilities.

Most of CUNY’s 40 doctoral programs are administered consortially through the CUNY Graduate Center (GC), whereby faculty are drawn from GC headquarters midtown and uptown as well as the major campuses of the five boroughs. Each venue houses doctoral-level instruction, which is concentrated in midtown but flourishes across the CUNY system, particularly in campus-based bench science laboratories that host trainees from high school through postdoctoral levels. A wide range of Centers and University Institutes at the GC and the campuses cross disciplinary boundaries to bring together scholars and researchers at the highest level.

Oversight of research activity and compliance, and fiscal management of awards are provided by the CUNY Office of Research and the Research Foundation of CUNY, respectively, which coordinate with the campus research and grants offices to provide educational and funding support to promote research activity.

ENROLLMENT AND STUDENT SUCCESS

Over the past 10 years, SAT scores at the highly selective colleges have increased from 1063 to 1152. A baccalaureate student in CUNY today is a more traditional student, younger, better prepared, with a high school degree, not a GED, and working fewer hours outside the classroom.

In the past ten years, community college enrollments have gone up almost 18 percent from 81,538 to 95,951, driven by improved reputation, competitive pricing, improved graduation rates at NYC high schools and improved graduation rates in the community colleges. The system believes that enrollment will remain robust for the foreseeable future, in large part because of improved retention and graduation.

CUNY is intimately tied to the city’s public schools. Seventy eight percent of CUNY’s freshmen come from the Department of Education, a ten point increase from a decade ago. To improve college readiness and to encourage strongly prepared students to come to CUNY, the university and the DOE acquired a Gates Foundation grant to work collaboratively to align curriculum and to improve 3 year and 6 year graduation rates. The effort has borne fruit on many fronts. To take just one example, college readiness is part of the DOE’s accountability metrics, and CUNY consults closely with the DOE in setting its readiness standards. CUNY is crucial to the New York City public schools and the schools are crucial to CUNY.
The Pathways Initiative: Encouraging Transfer

In fall 2013, CUNY implemented the Pathways initiative across its undergraduate colleges to streamline and harmonize general education requirements throughout the University to improve the transferability of general education courses. Although the proposal was very controversial when it was proposed and implemented, particularly at some colleges, over time it has gained acceptance. Annual assessments have shown that the predicted negative effects on enrollment patterns among departments never materialized and credit loss due to the non-transferability of courses declined precipitously. Beyond Pathways, there remains much work to be done to ease and improve transfer at CUNY, and much of that work has commenced. Although the Pathways Initiative left hard feelings in its wake, the initiative is now fully implemented, colleges have moved forward, and students are making better progress toward degrees.

Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP)

In 2007, at the then six community colleges, CUNY, with the support and funding from the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO), launched a creative and ambitious success program, Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP), which provides intensive advising, academic support and career development services, block scheduled first year courses, and an array of engagement activities. ASAP requires students to attend college full time and provides them with comprehensive resources for three full years, including a tuition waiver that covers any gap between a student’s financial aid and tuition and fees, MetroCards for use on public transportation, textbook resources and winter/summer course taking opportunities. ASAP has served nearly 34,000 students across 11 cohorts to date and has been carefully evaluated. Across all graduating cohorts to date, ASAP has a 3-year graduation rate of 53 percent, double the rate of matched comparison group students and triple the national urban community college average.

These successes inspired the City of New York to invest $77 million in ASAP, allowing it to scale up to 25,000 students across all of CUNY’s two-year colleges and three senior colleges. Expansion will also include a college-wide expansion at Bronx Community College to serve most incoming first-time freshmen.

The ASAP model is also being piloted in the baccalaureate space through John Jay College’s Accelerate, Complete and Engage (ACE), which launched in fall 2015 and aims to double four-year graduation rates. Early results are very promising with 65 percent of the first ACE cohort on track for on-time graduation vs. 37 percent of matched comparison group students while also demonstrating significant narrowing of achievement gaps. ACE will admit its third cohort in fall 2018 with funding from the City of New York.
ASAP has attracted national attention and the program is currently being replicated in three states. ASAP is among the most important developments in recent CUNY history and is a foundation for future success.

**The Excelsior Scholarship**

Governor Andrew Cuomo signed the Excelsior Scholarship bill into law in 2017 making all public colleges and universities tuition-free for families with under $125,000 (by 2019) in annual household income. The scholarship is designed as a last-dollar plan, applied to each qualifying student’s financial aid package after all other aid, including the State’s generous Tuition Assistance Program, Pell grants, City Council Scholarships, college scholarships, and other grants or scholarships are applied.

Awardees must be enrolled full-time, complete 30 credits per year, and agree to reside exclusively in New York State and not be employed in any other State for a continuous number of years equal to the duration of the award.

This Excelsior Scholarship is the first of its kind in the country. It will enable scores of New York State residents to attend a CUNY college tuition-free and establish a national model broadening access to higher education.