Getting to Graduation
A Bold New Strategy for Success

CUNY Matters
Office of University Relations
205 East 42nd St.
New York, NY 10017

N AN unprecedented initiative that could impact the lives of thousands of associate degree students, Chancellor James B. Milliken has announced that The City University of New York will embark on a comprehensive strategy to boost graduation rates and student success.

The initiative includes a full-scale transformation of Bronx Community College into an ASAP college — enrolling incoming, full-time freshmen into the University’s acclaimed academic support program.

The reimagining of BCC, which has the goal of graduating at least 50 percent of the students, is one of multiple strategies being launched by CUNY in what amounts to one of the most far-reaching student outcome improvement initiatives in public higher education.

The plans also include:
- With $842 million in city funding, CUNY will significantly expand the nationally recognized Accelerated Study in Associate Programs or ASAP, from more than 4,000 students to more than 25,000 by 2018. ASAP expansion will focus on increasing STEM-oriented participation in the program at six community colleges and three senior colleges that offer associate degree programs: City Tech, College of Staten Island and Medgar Evers College.
- CUNY Summer Start, an intensive eight-week program that shows great promise in helping students become proficient in math, will expand to 4,000 students by 2019.
- CUNY will expand a program to facilitate the awarding of associate degrees to students who have transferred out of community college and are already working toward earning a bachelor’s degree.
- A new scholarship program will be created to encourage community college students to earn associate degrees before transfer, a strategy that contributes to later success.
- The CUNY plan will utilize city funding with the goal of raising the overall community college graduation rate to 34 percent over the next decade. The University’s priority, the Chancellor said, “must be continuing to raise the level of academic quality and student success.”

Expansion planning will be led by Bronx Community College President Thomas A. Isekenegbe and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Claudia V. Schrader.

“The ASAP program’s impact on Bronx Community College students has already shown great success,” President Isekenegbe said. “When given academic and economic support, students have demonstrated they can excel. This new plan takes Bronx Community College to a new level where every one of our students will receive both the support they need and a fair shot at earning their degree in a more timely manner.”

ASAP, which enrolls students at nine CUNY colleges, has garnered national attention and has been lauded by President Barack Obama for providing comprehensive academic support and financial resources to help students succeed. ASAP students graduate at more than double the rates of non-ASAP students, according to an independent study.

The ambitious effort at Bronx Community College will enroll incoming freshmen into an ASAP pipeline, aiming to graduate at least 50 percent within three years.

At BCC, ASAP’s impact already has proved astonishing. Currently, just 11 percent of students there graduate within three years. However, for those in ASAP, the three-year graduation rate is 61 percent.

Students in ASAP, like Ambra Quinones, can attest to the program’s life-changing potential. Quinones said the financial help combined with the support of tutors has eased the burden of college. She is now focused on her dream of becoming a dentist.

“I would say the biggest things that have helped me are the MetroCards, the book vouchers and the tutors,” Quinones said. “Without ASAP, I don’t think there was any...”

Continued on next page
Getting to Graduation

A Bold New Strategy for Success

Continued from previous page

way that I could be in college full time.”

The nation’s community colleges enroll more than 6 million students and are educating the majority of promising future careers or four-year colleges offering bac-

elor’s degrees. However, nationally only about 21 percent of students get their asso-

ciate degree within three years. At CUNY, the three-year graduation rate for freshmen

in associate programs is 16.9 percent.

To change that, CUNY’s bold strategy includes expansion of proven programs that bolster student skills, proficiency and support at different stages leading into

and during enrollment in the University’s associate programs. ASAP and CUNY Start — a pre-college program that provides intensive reading and math help to students lacking proficiency skills — will be expanded. An additional strategy will focus on encouraging more community college students to earn their associate degrees after transferring to baccalaureate study, an effort sometimes referred to as

Reverse Transfer.

“CUNY has made remarkable progress over the last 15 years,” the chancellor said.

“It is in a very different place today.”

While I am convinced we’re on the

right track, we must admit we aren’t

on the path we need to be. We have much hard work ahead of us addressing the stubborn challenges to success in remediation, improving retention and graduation rates, and significantly improving our students’

successful transfer to baccalaureate study, as well as entry into graduate and profes-

sional programs and the workforce.”

Perhaps the most exciting part of the CUNY plan is the transformation of Bronx Community College into an all-ASAP campus, said Donna Linderman, University Dean for Student Success Initiatives and ASAP Executive Director.

“I think it has the potential of not only changing the lives of thousands of individual students but the future economic prospects of whole families and entire communities in the Bronx, the city’s poorest borough,” Linderman said.

Founded in 2007, CUNY’s ASAP program assists students in earning associate degrees within three years by providing a range of academic and personal supports. A recent report found ASAP dramatically improved students’ academic outcomes over three years, almost doubling graduation rates.

In the college-wide ASAP expansion, Bronx Community College students will receive support services and financial resources designed to remove barriers to full-time study, build student resiliency and support timely graduation. Key program components include full-time enrollment, consolidated scheduling, cohort course taking, intrusive advis-

ement, placement services, tutoring, summer and winter course taking and the immediate and continu-

ous addressing of any remedial needs. Financial resources include tuition waivers, MetroCards, and free

use of textbooks.

For many students, like Jason Barbosa, who have been out of high school for several years, the ASAP pro-

vided necessary support to succeed in college.

“I thought I was too old, that I was not smart enough,” said Barbosa of Bronx Community College. “I realize that ASAP is an every-kind-of-student program...it has been this family-like support that has kept me going and given me the

motivation and confidence to make it to my graduation.”

The importance of earning a degree to com-

pete in today’s job market was noted recently by

President Barack Obama as part of a broader federal agenda for higher education.

“In the coming years, jobs requiring at least an associate degree are projected to grow twice as fast as those requiring no college experience,” the president said in a speech at Macomb Community College in Warren, Mich.

For incoming CUNY students lacking

proficiency skills, the University will expand CUNY Start and Summer Start — two pre-college programs that work in conjunction with ASAP.

CUNY Start, founded in 2009, provides

15 to 18 weeks of intensive preparation in academic reading/writing, math, and “college success” to students whose scores on the CUNY Assessment Tests indicate that they are in need of significant remediation. Students who enroll in the academic program em-

ployrately start degree-program studies to take this transitional program, allowing them to reserve financial aid for credit-bearing

courses. CUNY Start will increase to 3,000 participants nine colleges this year.

CUNY Summer Start, a new intensive math immersion program for recent high school graduates, has achieved dramatic results, reporting that 92 percent of students emerge fully prepared for college-level math in just eight weeks.

Based on these impressive outcomes, the city has funded a major expansion of the

CUNY Summer Start program to assist 1,000 students by 2017 and 4,000 students by 2019, aiming to minimize remediation, help students get better grades in college and keep them on track to graduation.

In New York City, the need for providing basic proficiency skills is critical. Some 80 percent of students as a condensed version of the ASAP community colleges have been admitted to at least one remedial course in math, reading or writing.

In July and August, CUNY offered Summer Start to 159 incoming freshmen at three colleges: Borough of Manhattan Community College, Guttman Community College and Hostos Community College. Summer Start students had been admitted to CUNY, but the vast majority had both arithmetic and elemen-

tary algebra needs based on the CUNY Assessment Test scores.

With funding from the Petrie Foundation, CUNY Summer Start began in 2014 at BMCC with 50 students as a condensed version of the successful semester-long CUNY Start math program. Some 77 percent of students who completed CUNY Start’s math program have achieved proficiency. CUNY Summer Start was divided in two phases.

The first phase was six weeks long, four days a week, and five hours a day. Phase Two was two weeks long, five days a week, and five hours a day. Students had two opportunities to retake the CUNY Elementary Algebra Final Exam (CEAFE), once at the end of each phase. Students also received weekly MetroCards, which supported outstanding completion rates.

Students were taught by CUNY Start math faculty from across the University. Teachers were supported by in-class math tutors, who were former CUNY Start stu-

dents who had successfully matriculated into CUNY degree programs. Students attended a weekly college advisement seminar.

In coming years, CUNY plans to train enough teachers so the program can event-

ually be offered year-round in eight-week cycles for both fall and spring entrants.

Linderman, University dean for student success initiatives, said: “Through both programs — CUNY Start and CUNY Summer Start — we could help thousands of students who may other-

wise languish in longer developmental math sequences.”

As the academic year began, Chancellor James B. Milliken released a letter to the University community, summarized here, detailing CUNY’s recent accomplishments and developments affecting the University, and outlining his priorities and plans for the coming year and beyond.

HERE IS MUCH GOOD NEWS

to report and so many reasons to be proud of how one of the nation’s largest and most

important public universities serves the city, state and country. We have the highest

enrollment in our history; we’re launching a medical school and a graduate film

school; we’re investing more in doctoral education in the sciences; we’ve opened state-of-the-art research facilities; and we’ve recog-

nized nationally as providing among the best values in higher education. For these reasons and more, The University of New York

continues to be an indispensable institution with an immeasurable impact.

Key to CUNY’s steady growth in enroll-

ment and the positive local and national attention it attracts is an unparalleled value proposition. CUNY’s remarkable access is supported by low tuition, high financial aid and scholarship awards, and low student debt. But every bit as important as the measures of access and affordability are those of qual-

ity. CUNY is a tremendous value because of what we provide our students, city and state: extraordinarily talented faculty in the class-

room and laboratory, who are providing out-

standing instruction, creating new knowledge, and contributing to the public good.

Our Highest Priority

CUNY’s quality and many notable achieve-

ments are possible because of a dedicated, talented faculty and staff who have worked for far too long without a new contract and across-the-board salary increases. I am committed to rectifying that situation. I am excited about CUNY’s future and we have significant plans for the years ahead. They depend on our ability to recruit and retain outstanding faculty and staff. We continue to work with state and city leaders to be in a position to make a fair offer, while working at the bargaining table on non-economic elements of a proposed con-

tract. A new contract is our highest priority.

Legislative Results

The budgets from both state and city provided some important programmatic investments as well as much-needed capital funds for crit-

ical maintenance and some new projects. The state budget included new funding for community colleges and increased investment in a num-

ber of student services programs; provided $12 million for performance improvement plans and included a requirement for student

experiential learning. New sexual assault leg-

islation, championed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, was adopted and CUNY is changing policies and practices to comply with new require-

ments. The Governor’s continued support for CUNY 2020 and START-UP NY provides great opportunity for CUNY colleges to be

partners in New York’s economic growth.

The new city budget provides for a major expansion of the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs, or ASAP, eventually

CUNY Matters | November – December 2015
the Day, and the Future

Growing to $42 million and supporting 25,000 students. It also provides support for doubling the number of students in CUNY Start. The city provided funding awards for Guttman Community College students—a key ASAP benefit—and funding for critical maintenance at community colleges. The City Council added $17 million for merit scholarships. These allocations, together, represent what may be the most significant city investment in CUNY in decades. We are grateful to the Mayor and Council for their continued strong support.

Selected CUNY Highlights

There is so much that could be said about exciting developments at CUNY. To highlight a few: Our record enrollment is no surprise. People are increasingly recognizing the tremendous value represented by CUNY—high-quality education at a very affordable price. Notably, The Washington Monthly magazine recently announced that four of the top five “bangs for the buck” in the Northeast were CUNY colleges.

We had 17 new Fulbright winners this year, 15 new NSF Graduate Research Fellowships, as well as prestigious Goldwater and Truman Scholarships, and Soros Fellowships for New Americans. Only Harvard, Stanford, Yale and MIT had more Soros Fellows than CUNY. A Chronicle of Higher Education study about the undergraduate institutions producing “MacArthur Geniuses” identified two publics in the top 10—Berkeley and CUNY. A current CUNY graduate student won the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry, a recent alumnus won the National Book Award, and we celebrated our 13th graduate to win a Nobel Prize, which puts CUNY in rarefied air among the world’s universities.

Joining by Gov. Cuomo, we announced accreditation for a new CUNY School of Medicine at City College, building on the 10-year success of the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education and advancing a high priority of the Board of Trustees. Almost half the classes at Sophie Davis have been made up of students of color, compared to approximately 10 percent on average at medical schools nationally, and the majority of our graduates have gone on to practice in federally designated underserved areas. With the new School of Medicine, we will build on this impressive history.

The many exciting programs starting this fall include Brooklyn College’s new Feiststein Graduate School of Cinema, located within Steiner Studios in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The CUNY Law School launched a part-time JD program that is boosting enrollments and expanding access.

CUNY has mobilized to increase opportunities for undocumented students. Over the course of a year, all of our colleges led by our team at CUNY Central worked with TheDream.US Scholarship program to increase ten-fold the number of CUNY Dreamer scholarship recipients. We have 367 TheDream.US Scholars this year, the highest level of participation and representing almost half such scholarships given nationwide. At our spring event to recognize these CUNY Dreamers, two generous benefactors pledged $50 million to support TheDream.US program.

We opened some of the most advanced research space in the region at the CUNY Advanced Science Research Center and companion facility, the City College Center for Discovery and Innovation, as well as at Hunter College through a unique partnership with Weill-Cornell Medical College. I am encouraged by Hunter’s innovative partnership and am convinced that there are many more opportunities for collaborative efforts that leverage CUNY investments.

High Priorities for This Year

CUNY has made remarkable progress over the last 15 years, and it is in a very different place today. A new set of strategies was implemented for addressing developmental education needs and promoting student success and transfer. While I am convinced we’re on the right track, we must admit we aren’t where we need to be. We have much hard work ahead to address the stubborn challenges to success in remediation, improving retention and graduation rates, and significantly improving our students’ successful transfer to baccalaureate study, as well as entry into graduate and professional programs and the workforce.

We have created a number of impressive new programs, but our priority must be to continue to raise the level of academic quality and student success at our colleges throughout the five boroughs. This is difficult but essential work that will require the determination of talented people across CUNY.

In such effort, under the leadership of University Provost Vita Rabinowitz, we will take a close look this year at our remediation programs, particularly in math, to make sure we are doing everything that we should to help our students succeed. Similarly, the University Provost’s office will be working with appropriate colleges to develop strategies for improvement in our teacher preparation and workforce development programs.

We will expand a program CUNY-wide to award associate degrees to students who have transferred prior to receiving a degree but have more than completed—or could easily complete—equivalent coursework on their way to earning a bachelor’s degree. We will also create a new scholarship program to encourage community college students to earn their associate degree before transfer, a strategy that contributes to later success as well.

Our expansion of CUNY ASAP, recognized by President Barack Obama for its success in increasing graduation rates for community college students, begins in earnest. We expect to increase our ASAP population from more than 4,000 to more than 12,000 by fall 2017 and reach 25,000 students by 2018. We will focus first on increasing STEM participation in the program, at community colleges and in senior college pilots. We will begin our efforts to bring ASAP to scale with an exciting project at Bronx Community College.

At the same time, we plan to double over the next four years the number of students who participate in CUNY Start, which has demonstrated success in helping students efficiently meet their remediation requirements. We had successful pilots at three colleges this summer with “Summer Start,” which in a short period of time helps students become proficient and ready for fall matriculation. We will expand this program as well.

To help plan CUNY’s response to the state’s call for opportunities for experiential learning, I have named a task force chaired by John Jay College President Jeremy Travis and University Dean Suri Dutsch. This is an opportunity for CUNY to consider additional ways for our students to be more engaged in their studies and better prepared for graduate and professional study and a competitive work environment, and to identify the resources required for us to be successful.

To develop plans for performance funding required in the state budget, I have asked University Provost Vita Rabinowitz and Budget and Finance Vice Chancellor Matthew Sapienza to lead CUNY’s work on behalf of the Board of Trustees. We will increase the pool of funds for this purpose beyond the state investment for senior colleges so community colleges can participate. This is an exciting opportunity for CUNY to identify and fund initiatives designed to advance our shared goals.

We have engaged a leading fundraising consulting firm to help CUNY and all of our colleges better position ourselves for increased success in private fundraising, which is increasingly essential to the ability of public universities to meet their objectives in providing access, building quality and achieving distinction. I look forward to implementing recommendations that will help us more effectively make what I believe is the most compelling case for private philanthropy in New York.

Listening to our students, prospective students and college leaders, we will increase opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to live in University housing. We will continue to support promising individual college projects but will also explore opportunities for CUNY colleges to partner with each other to serve their students.

Convinced that online education can expand access, appeal to new learners, and facilitate degree completion and lifelong learning, I plan to support expansion of online courses and degree programs. State legislation this year lowered the barriers to institutions from outside New York to offer online programs here, and better positioned CUNY to do so in other states. I am hopeful the Governor will sign legislation allowing us more flexibility with non-resident online tuition.

I launched a strategic planning process last spring, and it is well underway. The Steering Committee of faculty, presidents and others has been active, and we continue to solicit suggestions from CUNY stakeholders. Visit the “21st Century CUNY” website often to check on progress and submit comments and suggestions: www.cuny.edu/21stCenturyCUNY

CUNY continues to enjoy remarkable success and I am convinced our best days lie ahead. We have assets of scale, diversity, talent and location that are unmatched anywhere. Good work has brought CUNY to this point, and there is much to be done next year and beyond. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with such talented faculty, staff, students, administrators and trustees, and will do everything I can to see that the aspirations we share for CUNY are met.
HAVING HEARD? CUNY has joined the international effort to fight cybercrime as part of the Global Cyber Alliance … The CUNY Graduate School of Journalism is the new home for The New York Times Student Journalism Institute… At the College of Staten Island, the track and field is about to get a $1 million face-lift.

The track and field at the College of Staten Island is poised to receive a $1 million face-lift. The upgrade is possible thanks to a grant from New York State Assemblyman Michael Cusick. The new track and field will enable CSI to start NCAA and women track teams and host intercollegiate events. The College of Staten Island serves thousands of students and visitors each and every day both in and out of the classroom. These upgrades to the track-and-field facilities will bring the athletic program into the 21st century and bring dozens more student athletes to the school,” says Cusick, who is a lifelong runner. The upgrades include replacement of the entire track, which has only been resurfaced once since its construction in 1984. Additionally, event facilities including shot put, discus, hammer throw, long jump, triple jump and high jump will be constructed within the grass oval on the inside of the track. There will also be an expansion of the bleachers seating to accommodate an additional 500 spectators. These new facilities will enhance the student experience and Athletics programs by allowing the creation of an NCAA Track and Field team, says CSI President William Fritz. “This investment comes at a most opportune time as the College is increasing its recognized locally, regionally, and nationally. Money magazine ranked CSI third in the state and eighth in the Middle Atlantic region for institutions that provide the best value for students’ tuition dollars. Forbes magazine followed by ranking CSI one of ‘America’s Top Colleges’ offering a high return-on-investment education,” says Fritz.

All the News That’s Fit to Teach. The CUNY Graduate School of Journalism has become the new home for The New York Times Student Journalism Institute, an annual two-week program designed to train young journalists and increase newsroom diversity. The program is open to student members of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ) and National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) as well as May graduates of historically black colleges or universities.

Frank Milano of Kingsborough Community College has received a $422,680 grant from the Maaspower Demonstration Research Corporation for “Evaluation of CUNY Start.” The NYS Education Department has awarded a $356,800 grant to Harriet/Fayne of Lehman College for a project entitled “Graduate Level Clinically Rich Teacher.”

Baruch College’s Vena Oldenburg has earned a Fulbright Senior Award for Scholarly Excellence, which she will use to work on a research project in India. Oldenburg, who has taught classes in global history for 25 years at Baruch, also teaches at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Evelyn Fernandes of The College of Staten Island for “Improvement of Internalized Stigma in Schizophrenia,” a project that has long led the way in cross-cultural studies of mental illness.

Continued from page 1

This $261,000 to the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to evaluate a major initiative to improve the health outcomes of public housing residents in East Harlem. The initiative will link residents with community health workers (CHWs) who have a unique understanding of the norms, values, and strengths of the communities in which they work. Earlier this year, a team of CHW began working with residents in five public housing developments to assist residents with hypertension, diabetes and asthma to manage these chronic diseases.

The partnership’s first core research project, called Project IMPACT (Implementing Million Hearts® for Provider and Community Transformation), was built on the Million Hearts® national initiative, a program led by the CDC and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services aimed at preventing a million heart attacks and strokes by 2017. Project IMPACT tests the influence of integrating community health worker programs with physician-level intervention models, using electronic health record-based tools to improve hypertension control among South Asians in New York City.
Evolving Friendship: In a study of the social lives of more than 100 students from the University of Rochester, tracked over 30 years, researchers found that individuals with a high quantity of social activities at age 20 and high-quality friendships at age 38 were found to have better psychological outcomes at age 50 than their less friendly peers.

Cheryl Carmichael, assistant professor of psychology at Brooklyn College and the CUNY Graduate Center and the study’s lead author, said the findings illustrate how familiar and design approaches to confront social connections evolve over time. “In our 20s, we need to interact with many different people in order to sharpen our ability to navigate social situations,” she said. “In our 30s, our social goals focus on emotional closeness.”

CUNY Cyber Warriors. CUNY has joined an international effort to combat cybercrime. The university has partnered with Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr., the City of London Police and the Center for Internet Security to form the Global Cyber Alliance, a not-for-profit dedicated to confronting cyber security risks domestically and abroad. CUNY is a charter member of the Global Cyber Alliance along with leaders from security, defense, retail, education, law enforcement, government and finance institutions, including American Express, Barclays Bank and Citibank. “CUNY has a long history of productive collaborations with the district attorney and industry leaders, working with faculty and students throughout the University on educating students in preparation for careers in related fields — and including programs designed to enhance public safety,” says Chancellor James B. Milliken. The Global Cyber Alliance will be based in John Jay College. We especially look forward to the expansion of opportunities for student internships and research as this initiative flourishes,” says Chancellor James B. Milliken. The Global Cyber Alliance will be based in New York City and London. It will work to inform members about online security risks in real time. Members will identify threats, form action teams and design approaches to confront and prevent these threats. “A crime prevented is far better than a crime prosecuted, but when information about a cyber threat or attack is not divulged, other institutions — and perhaps entire industries — remain vulnerable,” says Vance. “The cyber landscape is dotted with entities that are either for-profit or divided by region or industry. The Global Cyber Alliance has no such restrictions or limitations, crossing borders and sectors in an effort to map, understand, and thwart cybercrime, with no profit motive attached, and no goal other than the prevention of future crimes. We are inaugurating a new, better, international approach to fighting this global problem.” The Global Cyber Alliance will seek funding from members and partners. The District Attorney’s Office has committed $25 million in criminal asset forfeiture proceeds to pay for this work. The asset forfeiture funds are derived from settlements with international banks that violated U.S. sanctions. The City University of New York’s Institute for State and Local Governance advises and provides technical assistance for the investment of the asset forfeiture funds that total about $250 million. The funds are used in projects that will enhance public safety, aid in crime prevention, and promote a safer and more efficient criminal justice system.

The CUNY Service Corps kicked off its third year this fall with 900 new student-members. The program aims to get students to make a difference through service while gaining work experience. Service Corps members provide support to 125 non-profit and government agencies partners across New York City. This year’s partner organizations include the 9/11 Memorial & Museum, American Museum of Natural History, Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corp., Center for Court Innovation and New York-Presbyterian Hospital. Service placements last 24 weeks over the course of two semesters. Students work 12 hours a week and are paid $12 an hour.

Grade A for CUNY on the Smoke-Free Dean’s List. All of the campuses of The City University of New York have received an A Grade from the American Cancer Society in its 2015 New York State Dean’s List on Smoke and Tobacco Policies and Trends. The biannual Tobacco-Free U. Dean’s List report grades all New York campuses on their tobacco use restrictions. In addition, schools with 100 percent smoke-free or tobacco-free campus rules in place were assessed for compliance with those policies. Thirty percent of schools made the American Cancer Society and American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network’s report. Chancellor James B. Milliken stated: “We are pleased and honored that all the CUNY campuses received an A Grade from the American Cancer Society in its 2015 New York State Dean’s list on Smoke and Tobacco Policies and Trends. In 2011, the CUNY Board of Trustees banned the use of tobacco products and tobacco promotion and marketing on our campuses as well as tobacco industry sponsorship of athletic events and athletes, making CUNY one of the largest smoke-free public university systems in the nation. This policy is designed to protect the health of our students, faculty and staff and provide a cleaner and healthier environment for visitors. Smoking-related deaths from cancer, heart and lung diseases and other conditions account for approximately one in five deaths each year in the U.S. I wish to commend the American Cancer Society for its outstanding efforts to reduce smoking and eliminate the danger of secondhand smoke.”

The University has partnered with Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr., the City of London Police and the Center for Internet Security to form the Global Cyber Alliance, a not-for-profit dedicated to confronting cyber security risks, domestically and abroad.

The National Science Foundation has awarded $616,288 to Urmi Ghosh-Dastidar of the University of New York at the State University of New York at Stony Brook for “Antibody Strategies for Targeting Schools with ELL.”

Continued on previous page

Simran Kaur of Queensborough Community College’s Department of Biological Sciences and Geology has been awarded the Fulbright Academic and Professional Excellence Award. She will spend five months during 2015-16 at Guru Nanak Dev University, in Amritsar, India.

Debra Hairston-Parker of John Jay College has been awarded a $1,494,456 grant from the NICHD Center for Research on Trauma to “Improving HIV- and Alcohol-Related Outcomes among HIV+ Persons in Clinical Settings,” a project directed by Jeffrey Parsons of Hunter College, has been awarded $895,595 in grant funding from PHS/NIH National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Kieran Howard of Kingsborough Community College has won a $147,459 grant from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for the “Planetary Major Equipment (PME) Program.”

Wallace, a biodiversity web application created by a team led by City College biologist Robert P. Anderson and Jamie M. Kass, was one of six finalists that were selected worldwide by the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) in the inaugural Ebbe Nielsen Challenge. The competition reflects a wide range of uses of open-access biodiversity data from the GBIF network ranging from web applications to regional bird and frog soundscapes.

Jane Schulman of LaGuardia Community College has received a $3,201,318 grant from the Goldman Sachs Foundation for “10,000 Businesses.” Roger Sherwood of Hunter College has been awarded a $350,000 grant from the Robin Hood Foundation for “Project for Return & Opportunities in Veterans Education.” The National Science Foundation has awarded a $427,594 grant to Debra Hairston-Parker of the College of Staten Island for “CAREER: Structural and Mechanistic Analysis of Potassium Channel Modulatio by a Novel Activating Snake Toxin.”

The National Science Foundation has awarded $616,288 to Urmi Ghosh-Dastidar of New York City College of Technology with the “S-STEM: Advancing Student Futures.” Eleanor Armstrong-Thom of Queens College has won a $520,000 grant from the NYS Education Department for a project entitled “RITI Clinically Rich Graduate.”

Jennifer Tuten and Sherryl Graves of Hunter College have been awarded $125,000 from New York Community Trust for “Assistance to 2nd Grade Teachers to Provide High Quality Reading Instruction in 3 East Harlem Schools with ELL.” Prabhodhika Mallikarjuna of Lehman College has won a $334,221 grant from the National Institutes of Health for “Antibody Guided Cell-SELEX Technology.”

The New York Community Trust has awarded $430,000 to Michael Seltzer of Baruch College for the “NY Community Trust Fellowship Program.”

Zaghal Ahmed of the College of Staten Island has received two grants: $22,633 from the NYS Department of Health for “Special Cord Injury Research Institutional Support,” and $280,100 from the National Institutes of Health for a project entitled “Spinal Sciatic Dentric Current Stimulation Normalizes Muscle Tone in Spinal Cord Injured...
MAJORITY OF CUNY students are satisfied with the value of their college education and with their academic experience at the University - a strong endorsement mirrored in this fall’s continued record-breaking enrollment.

A national higher-education landscape featuring looming college costs, student indebtedness cresting toward $1.3 trillion, and politicians floating proposals to reduce student debt, anxiety is rippling through U.S. households over how to afford the all-important college degree.

But the waves of students surging into the University offer powerful evidence that students and families welcome — and are experiencing — the CUNY Value message that there is an affordable, quality alternative to high tuition and mountains of debt.

Demand for a CUNY education persists with a record fall 2015 enrollment of 275,313 degree-credit students counted so far, a slight increase over last year’s record 275,213 in-state students counted in spring 2014.

Sixty percent of respondents said their current college experience had met their expectations very well or well. For all of these “experience” questions, a significant number of students reported themselves neutral, while negative responses were low.

Chancellor James B. Milliken said the persistent heavy demand for a CUNY college education is “pretty simple to understand. It’s recognized nationally as one of the best values in education. Tuition is relatively low, the vast majority of our students receive financial aid, and relatively few graduate with student debt. At the same time our faculty are world-class and we offer attractive programs that prepare graduates for success. The combination is hard to beat.”

The University’s economic benefits are striking, and they extend past graduation. Seventy percent of undergraduates attend CUNY colleges tuition-free due to affordable tuition, New York State’s Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), Pell Grants, federal tuition tax credits, The New York City Council Academic Achievement Scholarships, privately raised funds, and foundations including TheDream.US Foundation, which this past year allocated more than half of its U.S. scholarships to CUNY students.

And while student debt — close to $1.3 trillion — has skyrocketed nationally, and tuition costs continue to rise nationwide, at CUNY eight in 10 students graduate from college without any federal education loan debt, increasing their financial strength compared to debt-burdened graduates and eliminating a potential drag on post-graduate plans and aspirations.

The percentage of CUNY students taking out federal loans is small, ranging from a high of 24 percent at Lehman College to a low of 6 percent at Queensborough Community College, according to the U.S. Department of Education’s new College Scorecard website, which reports individual college-related economic facts such as how much students who had taken federal student loans were earning 10 years after entering college.

CUNY stacks up well when it comes to those after-college earnings. According to College Scorecard, former students at the senior colleges consistently earned annual salaries that are higher than the national average, $34,343, 10 years after entering college. Baruch’s former students had the highest average earnings at $54,000, followed by Queens College’s at $48,000, Hunter’s ($44,800), and Brooklyn and City (both $44,500). On average, salaries of former CUNY community college students were around the national average.

According to the New York State Department of Labor, 87.6 percent of CUNY students graduating with baccalaureate and associate degrees from 2003 to 2010 were employed in the state. Of those, 88.4 percent had baccalaureate degrees and 86.3 percent, associate degrees. Among the top New York State industries employing CUNY graduates during the period were Health Care and Social Assistance, employing 14,659 graduates whose median annual earnings were $35,080; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, which employed 8,792 CUNY graduates who had median earnings of $46,408, and the Finance and Insurance Industry, which employed 7,984 with median earnings of $53,400.

Nationally, average tuition and fees at four-year colleges and universities have increased significantly over the 30 years from 1984-85 to 2014-15. At private four-year institutions, average published tuition and fees rose by 146 percent, to $31,231 in 2014-15. The average published increase for in-state students at public four-year institutions was 225 percent, to $9,139, according to the College Board.

CUNY students, however, pay much less for their education than most U.S. students. Tuition for full-time New York resident undergraduates is $6,330 annually at the senior colleges and $4,800 annually at the community colleges. This academic year, a projected $1.187 billion in financial aid will go to 329,500 CUNY students: $617.7 million in federal aid, $324.8 million in state aid, $42.2 million in CUNY institutional aid, and $302 million in federal loans.

“I’ve relied on financial aid most of my academic career,” said Sean DesVignes, a Brooklyn College senior and winner of a prestigious 2015 Beinecke Scholarship, which offers $34,000 toward graduate study. DesVignes, a nationally recognized poet, plans to eventually teach creative writing. “Writing is very important to me,” he said. “It’s taken me across the world, it’s gotten me a lot of money, and it’s going to put me through school.”

“The value of the CUNY system is exceptional,” said Sean Thatcher, a College of Staten Island biology major/ geology minor who received a highly selective 2015 Goldwater Scholarship, which is given to encourage high-achieving students to pursue STEM careers. Thatcher, who has been quadriplegic and in a wheelchair since a devastating lake accident six years ago, extolls the encouragement he has received from his CSI professors. “Basically, without the CUNY system I would not be the person that I am today,” he said.

“A lot of the professors here encourage undergraduate research, which is hard to come by at a lot of other institutions, but here at CSI they greatly support undergraduates and provide them with undergraduate research opportunities, as long as they are ambitious enough,” said Thatcher, who has...
A hard-knock, hardscrabble existence with the cards stacked mightily against you may not seem the perfect starting point for academic success. Then again, you might be dealt the CUNY card. Played well, it’s a lifesaver—as many students know. Here are just five of their stories.

**Alassane Ngaide** turned a life of hardship in a remote West African desert village into a life of academic achievement through CUNY. His story is one of many that underscore the University’s value in not only offering a quality, affordable education but the opportunity to achieve against all odds—saving lives, creating futures, strengthening the city itself.

“Being a student at City Tech taught me humility and acceptance,” says Ngaide, whose parents sold most of their possessions to send him from Mauritania to New York in 2000. “This college taught me that even a poor African man from a tiny village can become successful and realize his dream when he applies himself.”

With sharp math skills, he tutored at Brooklyn Educational Opportunity Center and CUNY’s SEEK opportunity program. He earned a bachelor’s in computer engineering at City Tech, where he was an honors scholar and won the college’s first Robert Noyce Scholarship, four National Science Foundation Scholarships and a Rickel Foundation scholarship for prospective teachers. He is now pursuing a master’s in mathematics at Queens College, and plans to teach college math.

**Tunisian immigrant Souha Ltifi** also took the long path to a CUNY education after arriving in New York in 1999 at age 20. Seventeen years later—after working minimum-wage jobs while supporting her twin sisters’ education in Switzerland, and marrying and having two children—it was her turn.

“Being a student at City Tech taught me humility and acceptance,” says Ngaide, whose parents sold most of their possessions to send him from Mauritania to New York in 2000. “This college taught me that even a poor African man from a tiny village can become successful and realize his dream when he applies himself.”

With sharp math skills, he tutored at Brooklyn Educational Opportunity Center and CUNY’s SEEK opportunity program. He earned a bachelor’s in computer engineering at City Tech, where he was an honors scholar and won the college’s first Robert Noyce Scholarship, four National Science Foundation Scholarships and a Rickel Foundation scholarship for prospective teachers. He is now pursuing a master’s in mathematics at Queens College, and plans to teach college math.

**1 Alassane Ngaide**

**2 Souha Ltifi**
CUNY Students Go for the Value

Continued from page 6

researched rock formations of the Palisades Sill in North Bergen, N.J., and aspires to become a college professor. “I’m looking to break barriers.”

Overall, the recent CUNY Student Experience Survey reflects a CUNY undergraduate student body that is ambitious, hard-working, mostly low-income, stretched for money and time. Fifty-four percent of the students CUNY-wide reported household income of less than $30,000, 38 percent reported less than $20,000. Forty-two percent were first in their family to attend college. More than half said they work for pay, 78 percent for living expenses, and 34 percent reported 50 percent said they wanted to work but could not find a job. Two-thirds of the student respondents said they take care of other people. The majority indicated spending little or no time on extracurricular activities, internships and volunteer work.

Not surprisingly with their time-crunch lives, many of the students indicated they want more flexibility as to when and how they take courses. Nearly half of respondents, 45 percent, were interested in more evening courses, and more than a third, 36 percent, wanted more weekend classes.

Thirty-nine percent sought more fully online courses, while 45 percent wanted to see more “hybrid” courses blending classroom and online instruction. Chancellor Milliken has stressed that he would like to see more online course opportunities, and more student comfort with online learning, at CUNY.

The majority of students reported satisfaction with CUNY facilities and technology resources such as wireless access and availability of software; students also expressed satisfaction with the size and general availability of their classes, and 66 percent said they could register for all the courses they wanted in the previous semester. However, a number of those surveyed reported difficulty registering for courses needed for their majors, a key reason being lack of available seats rather than lack of course availability.

Strong demand for CUNY seats is expected to continue. CUNY’s previous record enrollment, in fall 2014, was 275,132, reflecting a 4.9 percent increase over the five-year period beginning in 2010. Although in recent years college enrollment nationwide experienced a slight dip, it has started to rise again, according to data from the National Center for Education Statistics, which projects that new college enrollment highs will be set nationwide between this fall and fall 2013.

Among CUNY’s great strengths is its something-for-everyone offerings, delivered at 24 campuses located across the city’s five boroughs and serving as both academic and cultural centers while providing programs spanning college readiness, associate and baccalaureate degrees and graduate education to the Ph.D., J.D. and soon, the M.D. levels. The University’s academic sweep is the focus of this November’s CUNY Month, an annual celebration of the University’s programs that this year will offer numerous open houses and other CUNY-wide events.

Continued from previous page

here I could buy pants and shoes, I was satisfied.” Lotti says. “I was proud that my siblings completed college, but I found myself wishing that I had also attended college at a young age.”

Lotti’s turner wishes her into an associate degree in business administration at Queensborough Community College. She then moved on to accounting at Queens College.

Growing up during Nicaragua’s bloody struggle between leftist Sandinistas and right-wing Contras in the 1980s, Lopez had dreamed of school. “But there was only one school for the blind in the capital, six hours away.”

Lady Maria Bethel Lopez, 18, from Managua, Nicaragua, grew up in the capital of Nicaragua as a blind student. She did not have the support of her family until she was seven years old, when her mother moved with her to the United States. López attended New York City’s Isaac Bashevis Singer High School for the Blind, where she earned a B.S. in Business Administration in 2015. Lopez is now a Ph.D. student at New York University. She is currently conducting research on public health and education in Nicaragua.
Egypt’s Orphans and the Muslim Brotherhood

By Beth Baron

City College history professor Beth Baron chronicles the early work of Christian missionaries in Egypt in her new book, *The Orphan Scandal: Christian Missionaries and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood*. The book centers on the chilling story of a beating of a 15-year-old Muslim girl named Turkiyya Hasan at the Swedish Salaam Mission in June 1933. And it reveals how the actions of the missionaries ultimately led to the development and rise of the Muslim Brotherhood.

What are the results of all the national attention she receives? Turkiyya becomes the symbol of the anti-missionary movement, which galvanizes around her. She gives speeches in Port Said helping to raise funds for Muslim orphanages. And then she travels to Cairo, where she’s interviewed by a number of newspapers ... So she becomes a symbol of a girl who resisted pressure to convert and is in the spotlight for a moment in time.

How exactly did this incident lead to the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood? The Brotherhood was founded in 1928 ... as it was growing, they realized that they were competing with missionaries for, as they would say, 'the bodies and souls of the young children. Once this incident comes to life, the Muslim Brotherhood is able to use it as an exposé to get national attention on this issue. And after that, missionary institutions really come under a lot of investigation. The Brotherhood not only fought the missionaries ... but they also appropriated the missionaries’ methods. They realized that in order to attract children, attract followers, they needed to provide the same sort of social welfare institutions. So the Brotherhood started orphanages, schools, workshops, and so on.

What do you want readers to take away from this book? One of the lessons that I wanted readers to take away, it’s not just the understanding of — the Brotherhood today ... But it’s the lesson about foreign interventions — what sorts of impacts they have. We don’t think about American and European missionaries as having any relationship to organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood. We don’t think of our interventions in places like Afghanistan and Iraq as having the sort of impacts that they have. If one looks at something like the rise of ISIS today ... ISIS is one of these unintended consequences of American intervention in Iraq a decade ago. We need to be attuned to the repercussions of foreign actions and that they’re not always what we anticipate — or what we envision.
The People Who Are the Behind the Scenes, Building the CUNY of Today for Decades

By Barbara Fischkin

“I'M A ZIPPY PERSON,” says Hunter College’s Peggy Tirschwell. It’s a term often applied to new sports cars, but also a perfect way to describe her.

On a recent afternoon, Tirschwell’s provost stopped by to ask her about a proposed degree program. Joyously, she jumped up from her seat, gave him a rundown, planned follow-up calls. She describes the work she does as: “academic back office,” and she is an expert on many of the related details. For example, Tirschwell updates and reviews course requirements and program changes, using the tools of the new online catalogue. She also assists research to enable those who attended the college years ago and earned enough credits — but did not submit the required paperwork — to graduate. She helps to make this happen, even if the program they finished is no longer offered. “The state opens the degree for a short time,” she says. “I call it the Brigadoon effect.”

In the past, she also visited many other institutions as a member of numerous Middle States accreditation teams.

Tirschwell is 76. She is a grandmother who has knitted many of her life’s socks. Last spring, she also celebrated her 38th anniversary of marriage.

Tirschwell is among a very special, unofficial class of CUNY employees — those who have served the University and its colleges for decades, some at various institutions in different capacities. They are people who have both long resumes — and years of institutional knowledge at their fingertips. Some arrived not long after the city’s public colleges became CUNY in the 1960s. They have been witnesses to a history that includes state funding of the University, the city’s financial crisis and open enrollment.

Four of these long-serving employees, interviewed recently, all displayed great modesty, saying: “Don’t write too much about me.” Or “it’s okay if I wind up on the cutting room floor.” Or “Make this more about the University than me.”

Yet, in many ways, they and others with similar experiences are the University, its living foundation. Donald E. Farley, an engineer who has worked for the University since 1967 in the Facilities Planning Office and will turn 80 in November, has literally overseen the building of many of the University’s actual foundations.

According to an account of an oral history prepared by CUNY: “As Senior Vice Chancellor for Facilities, Construction and Management, Farley was prominently associated with every aspect of the construction of a large number of whole new campuses, as well as many new buildings on existing campuses and the adaptive renovation of office and industrial buildings for new academic uses.”

Now a Senior Vice Chancellor, Emeritus, Farley has worked continuously — part time — since his retirement in 1993, as a special assistant to three Chancellors. He remembers the days when the University was “basically treated like another city agency,” and when it was said, “there is more space in cemetery plots than there is for students in the city university.” In 1966, he saw “the first significant state money that came in to CUNY. We’re about five years behind SUNY. We had great students and great faculty but very old and inadequate facilities … you squeezed students into classrooms; we had half a dozen faculty in one room.” Today, he says, “We are very proud of our physical plant.”

Those interviewed — including three of the four who have retired and returned — say they would not have stayed if the work was not so compelling. “I’ve held the same position for 38 very interesting years,” says Robert Buckley, 66, Hunter’s director of the Office of Research Administration. With

Help With Your Finances

Do you have a question about a financial issue? If so, you can get help through CUNY’s Work/Life Program, now administered by Deer Oaks EAP. The program, which offers free assistance with a wide variety of life’s challenges, also provides free consultations with financial experts on matters ranging from credit and debt to purchasing or saving for retirement. Experts are available without an appointment during regular work hours and by appointment on Saturdays. Also offered is a full selection of financial articles, tip sheets, financial calculators and other tools. To explore what is available, search.cuny.edu “Financial Help.” The login and password are both “cuny” and for an appointment or for more information on programs employees can also call (888) 993-7650. For emergency assistance please call this number as well. To see a free Webinar on the Work/Life program in general see search.cuny.edu “WorkLife Webinar.”

Sharpen Your Writing Skills

For some, nothing strikes fear like being asked to write an important message. If you’d like to hone your work-related writing skills and develop some “writing discipline,” please visit the CUNY WriteSite. http://writesite.cuny.edu. It has been launched as a collaboration by select CUNY faculty, administrators, and students. The WriteSite is an online writing lab, or OWL, offering instructional support in grammar and style, providing hints on how to handle various kinds of writing, and exhibiting interactive practice exercises and discussions of issues connected with writing.
The People Who Are the University was needed. I know a little about a lot of current duties. “I’ve worked on whatever extra pair of hands,” she says about her libraries. “Everyone can always use an BCC to make buildings accessible to the back full time.”

For years “resisted the siren call to come retire, for good, very soon, she says having Resources Management. She is hoping to vice chancellor of the Office of Human college, retired again and then came back University Dean for Affirmative Action. professor of history at Bronx Community City College, moving on as an assistant professor of history at Brooklyn Community College. From 1994 until 1998, she was the University Dean for Affirmative Action. She retired, taught at a SUNY community college, retired again and then came back to CUNY as a special consultant to the vice chancellor of the Office of Human Resources Management. She is hoping to retire, for good, very soon, she says having for years “resisted the siren call to come back full time.” In 1973, she was on a committee at BCC to make buildings accessible to the disabled, in compliance with a pioneering federal law. More recently, she has researched services for retirees, apart from formal benefits — such as access to libraries. “Everyone can always use an extra pair of hands,” she says about her current duties. “I’ve worked on whatever was needed. I know a little about a lot of things.” About changes at CUNY, she says: “I have gone from being the sole female Hispanic member in a department and president’s cabinet to seeing an increase in the number of women and persons of color as faculty and college presidents. There have been changes at all levels. Not as many as I would like to see. But you are always pushing. It can always get better.”

Miranda was born in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, and moved to Manhattan when she was 5 and then to the Bronx. She is especially proud of starting one of the first ASPIRA clubs while teaching at Roosevelt High School and then at BCC. One of her students at both schools is now Bronx Supreme Court Justice Lucindo Suarez. And, yes, they have been in touch. Each story about these long-serving employees could be a book. Tirschwell, for example, started her career doing part-time research in 1965 for 83.50 an hour because she needed $500 to send her son to nursery school. When asked by a friend who passed the job on to her if she knew what CUNY was, she replied: “No.” (That son, Peter Tirschwell, is now executive vice president of JOC Group, publisher of the Journal of Commerce.)

“There are wonderful people here,” Tirschwell says, looking sappy — and fashionable as so many grandmothers and grandfathers and their contemporaries do these days — in olive green leggings. “People care about education for the good of themselves, for the good of other people, and for the good of the students.” To this Farley adds, “I love the place and I love the people. I don’t think that in 49 years I have regretted coming to work more than four or five days.”

modesty, only when asked would he provide a biographical sketch from a grant proposal, which notes that during his tenure grant funding for the college has grown from $3 million to $45 million a year. Others consider him to be akin to a CUNY “dean of grant officers.” For example, he has the best and most up-to-date list of those who are invaluable in compiling brochures of faculty and student awards and grants.

Also interviewed was Sylvia Miranda, who will turn 73 in November and is currently acting as interim administrator for the University Office of Recruitment and Diversity. She has worked for the University for 45 years, starting as a lecturer in the SEEK department at City College, moving on as an assistant professor of history at Bronx Community College. From 1994 until 1998, she was the University Dean for Affirmative Action. She retired, taught at a SUNY community college, retired again and then came back to CUNY as a special consultant to the vice chancellor of the Office of Human Resources Management. She is hoping to retire, for good, very soon, she says having for years “resisted the siren call to come back full time.”

In 1973, she was on a committee at BCC to make buildings accessible to the disabled, in compliance with a pioneering federal law. More recently, she has researched services for retirees, apart from formal benefits — such as access to libraries. “Everyone can always use an extra pair of hands,” she says about her current duties. “I’ve worked on whatever was needed. I know a little about a lot of things.” About changes at CUNY, she says: “I have gone from being the sole female Hispanic member in a department and president’s cabinet to seeing an increase in the number of women and persons of color as faculty and college presidents. There have been changes at all levels. Not as many as I would like to see. But you are always pushing. It can always get better.”

Miranda was born in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, and moved to Manhattan when she was 5 and then to the Bronx. She is especially proud of starting one of the first ASPIRA clubs while teaching at Roosevelt High School and then at BCC. One of her students at both schools is now Bronx Supreme Court Justice Lucindo Suarez. And, yes, they have been in touch. Each story about these long-serving employees could be a book. Tirschwell, for example, started her career doing part-time research in 1965 for $83.50 an hour because she needed $500 to send her son to nursery school. When asked by a friend who passed the job on to her if she knew what CUNY was, she replied: “No.” (That son, Peter Tirschwell, is now executive vice president of JOC Group, publisher of the Journal of Commerce.)

“There are wonderful people here,” Tirschwell says, looking sappy — and fashionable as so many grandmothers and grandfathers and their contemporaries do these days — in olive green leggings. “People care about education for the good of themselves, for the good of other people, and for the good of the students.” To this Farley adds, “I love the place and I love the people. I don’t think that in 49 years I have regretted coming to work more than four or five days.”