

**Testimony Submitted for**  
**Joint Senate and Assembly Legislative Budget Hearing on**  
**Higher Education Budget**  
**Lawrence Greengrass, President, and David Covington, Executive Director**  
**The Alumni Association of the City College of New York (AACCNY)**  
**Tuesday, February 25, 2025**

Good Morning, Chairs Krueger, Stavisky, Hyndman, Pretlow, and members of the Senate and Assembly Higher Education committees, the Senate Finance, and Assembly Ways and Means committees.

On behalf of the over 150,000 alumni of The City College of New York (CCNY) and our more than 10,000 alumni association members, We submit this formal testimony in **support of full funding for the City University of New York (CUNY) in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 New York State budget.**

For over 175 years, CCNY has been the flagship institution of CUNY, playing a critical role in providing high-quality, accessible education to generations of New Yorkers. CUNY serves over 240,000 degree-seeking students, most from historically underserved backgrounds. As the premier public university system in New York, CUNY is a vital engine of social mobility, economic opportunity, and workforce development. Investing in CUNY is an investment in our state's future and its residents' prosperity.

**Why CUNY Matters** CUNY is a transformational institution. Nearly 82% of first-time undergraduate students come from New York City public schools, and CUNY has been shown to elevate low-income students into the middle class at almost six times the rate of all Ivy League institutions combined. CUNY graduates collectively contribute \$80 billion annually to the economy. City College alone generates an annual economic impact of \$1.9 billion while supporting over 16,760 jobs in key sectors such as healthcare, technology, and public service. Ensuring robust financial support for CUNY will safeguard these benefits for future generations.

**Key Priorities in the FY2025 Budget Proposal** To sustain and enhance CUNY's role as a beacon of opportunity, we urge the Senate and Assembly to prioritize the following initiatives:

- **Investment in Student Success Programs:** Expand the Accelerate, Complete, Engage (ACE) and Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP), which significantly boost graduation rates and reduce the cost per graduate.
- **Fair Faculty and Staff Compensation:** Ensure funding for collective bargaining agreements and mandatory cost increases to allow CUNY to attract and retain world-class faculty and staff without diverting resources from student services.
- **Workforce Development and Career Success:** Increase investment in career readiness programs, including paid internships, apprenticeships, and industry partnerships to provide direct pathways from college to high-demand careers.
- **Access and Equity Initiatives:** Enhance funding for crucial programs like the New York Opportunity Promise Scholarship, MetroCards for students in need, and expanded support for students with disabilities to ensure that financial barriers do not hinder academic success.
- **Modernization of Facilities and Technology:** Allocate funding for deferred maintenance, energy-efficient campus upgrades, and technological enhancements to create a safe and modern learning environment for all students.
- **Support for Health and STEM Education:** Strengthen CUNY’s capacity to train healthcare professionals, expand STEM education, and fund research initiatives that drive innovation and economic growth.

**The Economic Case for Supporting CUNY** The economic return on investment in CUNY is undeniable. The university system is a key driver of New York’s workforce, particularly in essential fields like education, healthcare, public administration, and technology. Every dollar invested in CUNY translates into increased tax revenues, higher workforce productivity, and reduced reliance on social services. CCNY alone contributes significantly to the regional economy, with its alumni generating \$1.5 billion in additional income annually.

**A Call to Action** We respectfully urge you to:

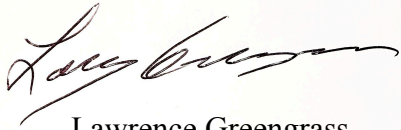
- Support full funding of CUNY in the FY2025 state budget.
- Prioritize the critical initiatives outlined above to strengthen CUNY’s ability to serve students and communities across New York.
- Champion long-term financial stability measures for CUNY to secure its role in educating future generations, driving economic resilience, and being the vehicle for upward mobility for all New Yorkers.

Your leadership and commitment are essential in ensuring that CUNY remains a pillar of educational excellence and economic prosperity in New York. By fully funding CUNY, you

affirm your commitment to equity, workforce development, and the long-term growth of our state and the boundless potential of our most precious resource: New York human talent.

We appreciate your attention to this urgent matter and look forward to your support.

Sincerely,



Lawrence Greengrass  
President  
Alumni Association of The City College  
of New York

Sincerely,



David Covington  
Executive Director  
Alumni Association of The City College  
of New York