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Dear City College Student:

As most of you know, the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York will meet on Monday, November 28, to consider and in all probability pass a five-year plan to raise tuition at CUNY, effective beginning Fall 2012. Under the plan, in-state, undergraduate tuition would rise by \$150 per semester. I realize that this is an issue of concern to many of you, and I want to take this opportunity to both provide some context, and to share with you my commitment – and the commitment of this administration – to keeping City College affordable for all of our students.

BACKGROUND

As you know, public universities across the United States are raising tuition as state legislatures, facing vastly larger deficits in a bad economy, cut back on their support for public higher education. City College and City University have offered and will continue to offer an excellent education at one of the lowest tuitions in the nation. This is clear from a quick look at our closest competitors among public universities in this region (not counting SUNY, whose tuition rises effectively in lock-step with ours). In-state, undergraduate tuition at the University of Maryland is currently \$6,966 per year, for example; Rutgers' tuition is \$10,104, and Penn State's is \$15,124. And of course you know that tuition at private universities in this city ranges from 6.5 to 8 *times* what it is at City College.

The plan under consideration by the Board of Trustees presents tuition increases that are predictable and gradual. And there is an important difference this year. All previous tuition increases have been used to offset New York State's budget reductions. *For the first time, the entire tuition increase comes directly to the College, providing more resources to hire full-time faculty and to support students.* In addition, the plan includes a requirement to protect our most economically disadvantaged students: if TAP does not increase to fully cover the cost of tuition, the College is mandated to use funds from the tuition increase to bridge the gap between the TAP ceiling and the cost of tuition for those who qualify for full TAP.

This brings us to some important numbers. This year, approximately 12,000 out of 16,000 students – 75% of our students – received financial aid, including federal, state and city assistance, and more than \$5 million in privately funded scholarships. Importantly, 42% of all our students received aid covering their full tuition, and attended tuition free; 59% of our freshmen class attended tuition free. In addition, we employ hundreds of City College students in campus jobs, both in and beyond the federal work-study program.

OUR COMMITMENT

Although no one I know wants a tuition increase, I do not believe that the support that we are likely to receive from New York State will improve any time soon, and I believe that these gradual tuition increases are rational and necessary at this point in time to continue to improve the educational experience at City College. My commitment to you is that we will do everything in our power to mitigate their adverse effects.

- * We will redouble our efforts to raise private funds for scholarships; and
- * we will target some of these funds as “bridge” scholarships specifically for those students whose work and family circumstances do not qualify them for full TAP and Pell, but who nonetheless are struggling to meet their tuition and are at risk of dropping out.
- * We will continue and strengthen our “bridge-the-gap” no-interest loans to cover tuition increases that I announced last year.
- * We will identify students at risk of losing their financial aid, and build support programs that will enable them to meet the academic and workload requirements to keep it.
- * We will actively lobby for the Dream Act, and in the interim, for the extension of TAP to out-of-status students who are currently eligible to attend City College as in-state students. We will look for private support for these students.
- * We will redouble our efforts to hire even more City College students wherever possible, to keep you on campus and working toward your goal of graduating on time.

By your presence here at City College, you are making an invaluable investment in your future – and in the future of this community, this state and this nation. I am grateful for that; we are investing in you. And we are determined to do everything in our power to make your hard work – your investment – a success.

Sincerely,



Lisa S. Coico
President