

# *Public Hearing*

before

## ASSEMBLY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

*"The Committee will hold three public hearings on higher education reform. The issues to be discussed at the hearings will include, but not be limited to, higher education affordability, accountability, college readiness, degree attainment, graduation rates, remedial instruction, dual enrollment, and reverse transfer agreements"*

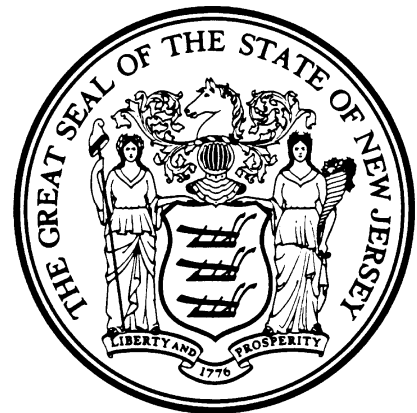
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**LOCATION:** Hudson County Community College  
Jersey City, New Jersey

**DATE:** June 11, 2014  
1:00 p.m.

### **MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:**

Assemblywoman Celeste M. Riley, Chair  
Assemblyman Joseph Cryan  
Assemblywoman Mila M. Jasey  
Assemblyman Raj Mukherji  
Assemblyman Robert Auth



### **ALSO PRESENT:**

Adrian G. Crook  
Office of Legislative Services  
Committee Aide

Keith White  
Assembly Majority  
Committee Aide

*Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by*  
The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,  
Hearing Unit, State House Annex, PO 068, Trenton, New Jersey

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CELESTE M. RILEY  
Chair

THOMAS P. GIBLIN  
Vice-Chair

MILA M. JASEY  
NANCY J. PINKIN  
LINDA STENDER  
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**New Jersey State Legislature**  
**ASSEMBLY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
STATE HOUSE ANNEX  
PO BOX 068  
TRENTON NJ 08625-0068

**REVISED**  
**PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

The Assembly Higher Education Committee will hold three public hearings on higher education reform. The issues to be discussed at the hearings will include, but not be limited to, higher education affordability, accountability, college readiness, degree attainment, graduation rates, remedial instruction, dual enrollment, and reverse transfer agreements.

The hearings will be held at the following places at the dates and times listed:

Wednesday, May 14, 2014  
10:30 AM

The College of New Jersey  
School of Education Building, Room 212  
2000 Pennington Road  
Ewing, New Jersey 08628

\*Wednesday, May 28, 2014  
10:30 AM

Rowan University  
Chamberlain Student Center  
Room 221  
201 Mullica Hill Road  
Glassboro, New Jersey 08028

Wednesday, June 11, 2014  
\*1:00 PM

Hudson County Community College  
Culinary Conference Center  
Scott Ring Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
161 Newkirk Street  
Jersey City, New Jersey 07306

*The public may address comments and questions to Adrian G. Crook, Committee Aide, or make bill status and scheduling inquiries to Larkin Cugnitti, Secretary, Marguerite Tazza, Secretary, or Julia A. Love, Secretary, at (609)847-3850, fax (609)984-9808, or e-mail: OLS Aide.AHI@njleg.org. Written and electronic comments, questions and testimony submitted to the committee by the public, as well as recordings and transcripts, if any, of oral testimony, are government records and will be available to the public upon request.*

Persons wishing to testify should call (609) 847-3850. The committee requests that the oral presentation be limited to five minutes. All persons who are testifying should submit 15 written copies of their testimony the day of the public hearing. Persons who are not presenting oral testimony may submit 15 copies of written testimony for consideration by the committee and inclusion in the record.

\*The public may address any of the higher education reform topics listed above; however, the focus of the hearings will be discussion on the following bills:

(OVER)

Assembly Higher Education Committee

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A-676 Cryan/Singleton/Riley	Directs Secretary of Higher Education to establish performance-based funding plans for public institutions of higher education.
A-2800 Riley/Giblin/Jasey/Cryan/ Fuentes	Requires high school students to be assessed using college placement cut scores to determine readiness for college-level course work, and Commissioner of Education to develop plan to improve college and career counseling for students.
A-2801 Jasey/Stender/Riley	Provides that no more than 120 credits will be required for baccalaureate degree awarded by a public institution and no more than 60 credits for an associate degree.
A-2802 Riley/Cryan/Giblin/ Mukherji/Lagana	Directs Secretary of Higher Education to establish a communication and incentive plan to encourage re-enrollment in college; requires Statewide reverse transfer agreement.
A-2803 Cryan/Riley	Requires independent colleges report certain consumer information on their websites; requires information on remedial instruction to be provided by public and independent colleges; directs how remedial education is delivered at public and certain independent colleges.
A-2804 Giblin/Riley/Cryan/ Benson	Requires county colleges to develop plan to achieve three-year graduation rate of at least 33 percent for full-time degree-program students by 2019-2020 academic year.
A-2805 Jasey/Riley/Cryan/ Stender/Pinkin	Directs Secretary of Higher Education to establish common core course numbering system for public institutions of higher education.
A-2807 Cryan/Riley/Eustace/ Quijano/Lagana	Prohibits four-year public and independent institutions of higher education from increasing resident undergraduate tuition and fees for nine continuous semesters following student's initial enrollment.
A-2808 Giblin/Eustace/Riley/ Benson	Directs Secretary of Higher Education to study prevalence, cost, and quality of on-line courses compared to traditional classroom courses offered by institutions of higher education.
A-2809 Cryan/Riley/Quijano/ Pinkin	Requires institutions of higher education to develop open textbooks available to students at no charge and requires buyback of used textbooks at 50 percent of purchase price.
A-2810 Cryan/Riley/Quijano/ Lagana	Allows gross income tax deduction for certain student loan interest.

(OVER)

Assembly Higher Education Committee  
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A-2811 Cryan/Riley/Mazzeo/ Pinkin	Prohibits four-year public and independent institutions of higher education from requiring students to purchase meal plans and permits the institutions to only offer meal plans in the form of a spending allowance.
A-2812 Riley/Cryan/Diegnan/ Giblin/Benson	Requires development of longitudinal data system that maintains individuals' data from preschool through entry into workforce.
A-2813 Cryan/Burzichelli/Riley	Requires closure of a four-year public institution of higher education that fails to achieve a six-year graduation rate of at least 50% for full-time undergraduate students.
A-2814 Cryan/Burzichelli/Riley	Directs Secretary of Higher Education to revoke proprietary school's license to award academic degrees if school fails to achieve certain minimum graduation rates.
A-2815 Pinkin/Cryan/Riley/ Quijano/Benson	Requires New Jersey Educational Facilities Authority to annually prepare report on debt held by public institutions of higher education.
A-2816 Cryan/Riley/Pinkin/ Lagana	Requires State Auditor to conduct audit of fees charged by public institutions of higher education.
A-2817 Riley/Singleton/Jasey/ Cryan/Fuentes	Requires all school districts and public institutions of higher education to offer dual enrollment programs to provide college-level instruction to high school students and requires these students be charged a reduced tuition rate.
A-2818 Stender/Riley/Cryan/ Lagana	Requires certain undergraduate students to file degree plan and requires public institutions of higher education to develop pathway systems to graduation.

Issued 5/9/14

\*Revised 5/23/14 - The committee will take testimony on A-676, A-2800 through A-2805 and A-2807 through A-2818. Please note change in location on 5/28/14 and change in time on 6/11/14.

For reasonable accommodation of a disability call the telephone number or fax number above, or TTY for persons with hearing loss 609-777-2744 (toll free in NJ) 800-257-7490. The provision of assistive listening devices requires 24 hours' notice. Real time reporter or sign language interpretation requires 5 days' notice.

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**ASSEMBLYWOMAN CELESTE M. RILEY (Chair):** We're going to start.

Good morning, everyone. Wait -- which one works? (referring to PA microphones)

Good morning, everyone. Good afternoon, everyone. Well, you know what? I got here at 10:00 (laughter) thinking that the meeting started at 10:30, for some reason; and I've been hanging around this lovely town of Jersey City.

My name is Celeste Riley; I am an Assemblywoman from the 3rd Legislative District. I am Chair of Higher Education for the Assembly.

And we are here at our third and final hearing of the 20-bill package that was introduced back in March by our Committee, to listen to the testimony of anyone in the audience who would like to talk about any one of the bills.

We have Raj -- help me with your last name.

**ASSEMBLYMAN MUKHERJI:** Mukherji (indicating pronunciation).

**ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY:** Mukherji -- Assemblyman Raj Mukherji; we have Assemblywoman Mila Jasey; and we have Assemblyman Auth. We do have Assemblywoman Linda Stender coming, and Assemblyman Joe Cryan -- they are on their way. But I think it would be best if we start.

All right. So I am going to invite up the wonderful President of Hudson Community College, who is allowing us to visit his facility. And thank you for hosting this hearing.

I'm also going to bring up Larry Nespoli, who is the President of the New Jersey Community College -- Council of County Colleges; I apologize. If I start tripping on my words it's because I think I should be in bed. (laughter)

Good morning -- good afternoon.

**G L E N G A B E R T, Ph.D.:** Why don't you get one this way too, so we can prove they were here for the students. (laughter) (referring to photographers)

**ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY:** Now, first of all, thank you very much for hosting, President Gabert.

**PRESIDENT GABERT:** Gabert. (indicating pronunciation)

**ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY:** And I just really am pleased, because I'm a strong advocate of community colleges being in the urban locations because of who they serve. So I really do appreciate when I come into the town -- Jersey City -- that I see it, right here, in the downtown area; and several locations, not just this one. So I'm very impressed.

**PRESIDENT GABERT:** Thank you.

**ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY:** I'd love to hear--

**PRESIDENT GABERT:** Well, we're delighted to have you here, and welcome. I'm sure Assemblyman Mukherji welcomes you too to Jersey City. He's a frequent visitor to our campus.

We sometimes don't get a lot of visitors from other parts of this state; they think that we're more remote than we are. This is a tremendously convenient location. We're just about a couple hundred yards from the PATH station, three stops from Christopher Street, and two stops from Newark Penn Station.



It's an interesting campus, an interesting location. Were you here 350 years ago you'd be sitting in the walls of old Bergentown. In that little triangular park -- which is a college park today -- it was an apple orchard, and Peter Stuyvesant sat there many times drinking cider --and probably quite a bit of cider, if the stories are true about him. (laughter) And so it's an interesting location.

Reflecting this community, this college is incredibly diverse: more than 85 percent of the student body is minority; in a typical year they will come from 140 countries of origin and speak 50 different languages; 25 percent of our student body or more enter their college career here through the portal of ESL. So it's really quite phenomenal.

And to see those students come in like that and then to graduate a few years later and to go on-- And we have wonderful records -- NJCU and St. Peter's and Rutgers, of course. But this year we had a student go to the International Relations School in Paris; we've had students, in the last couple of years, go to Yale, and NYU, and Penn State. We had a student this year on a full ride to Texas A&M. So it's really quite phenomenal when you see them starting where they do and coming out of the process a few years later speaking English and transferring on. It's an exciting thing.

We have two campuses. We have this campus in Jersey City, and we have 12 facilities within a two-block area and they are all inside of this standard. And we also have a beautiful campus up in Union City on top of the Light Rail station. You literally come out of the subway station into the campus. We have about 3,000 students in that campus and about 6,000 students in this college here, so we've been a growing institution.

And I might say that this tremendous growth-- And in the last 20 years it's more than one-quarter billion dollars of investment in this community through this community college. And I have to thank you. Of that \$250 billion dollars (*sic*) -- probably we wouldn't have done it without Chapter 12, and your tremendous support of Chapter 12.

So you want to see what your Chapter 12 dollars do? You can look at this building here -- this is the Culinary Arts Institute; it opened about four or five years ago. This is the largest teaching laboratory for culinary arts in the region. It is one of the only fully accredited culinary arts programs in the region; the only one with comparable accreditation is the Culinary Institute of America. It may blow your mind: There are 700 students enrolled in this division. We have a morning, afternoon, and evening division. Courses are taught at all of our facilities seven days a week, but also in this one.

We have a Hotel Management program as well; it's a pretty phenomenal program. If you've seen the *Cake Boss*, the series has been filmed here; *Iron Chef* has been filmed here. If you've seen the Progresso soup commercials with the cans talking to each other in the kitchen -- that's done on the third floor. (laughter)

We're opening a library. This college originally had no buildings 25 years ago -- it was really kind of a scandalous thing. So Chapter 12 has done that. A library is opening two blocks down the street. Thank you again for Chapter 12. It's going to be 110,000 square feet, with 35,000 square feet of reading rooms, a rooftop garden. It's going to have a 9/11 memorial on the roof where you're actually going to be able to look

through the memorial and see the old site of the original buildings -- you know, quite exciting.

One of the things that's kind of neat about this college, and then I'll be quiet. Because you know, we are all similar in many ways, but some things we do differently. We're extremely proud of our art collection here. It's 10 years old; we have almost 900 pieces in the collection. It is one of the largest art collections at any community college in the United States and it's growing rapidly. We received a significant gift of over 400 pieces this year. We are one of the better collections in the state now of emerging New Jersey artists. The collection-- We take anything as a gift in kind if it's nice art, but we focus on emerging New Jersey artists and artists who celebrate the urban milieu or art that celebrates the diversity of our students. And if you look at our buildings, our goal is to make every building an art museum. And all of the buildings have original art in them; as you see, the annotations are coming in the more -- not only describing the art piece, but describing why it was selected and its teaching values. And it's coming now online, and eventually we'll have thousands of pieces in the collection. And we think that's something unique.

So we're glad you're at Hudson County. It's an exciting place, and we're always so happy to welcome you here. It's our honor, so thank you for coming.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Thank you very much for your testimony.

**LAWRENCE A. NESPOLI, D.Ed.:** And Madam Chair and members of the Committee, with your indulgence, I just wanted to -- I can't help myself -- brag on a good friend and colleague here for a second.

You know, there are tough jobs in life -- being an Assemblywoman and Assemblyman -- tough job. But being a college President today is (indiscernible) tough job too. And Dr. Gabert has had one heck of a run and the run continues. Twenty--

PRESIDENT GABERT: Two.

DR. NESPOLI: Twenty-two years here at Hudson County Community College. And under his leadership, you've heard, it's become a very vibrant and strong community college. And he also is one of our most respected and senior community college presidents, and brings great wisdom to our State level table.

So thank you, Glen.

PRESIDENT GABERT: Thank you. I'm appreciative that you didn't say *oldest*. (laughter)

DR. NESPOLI: I was careful to say *senior*.

So, Madam Chair and members of the Committee, Assemblyman Cryan and others, I've said this to the Chairwoman privately, but let me say it more publicly today. These bills really are a shout-out that shows New Jersey's leadership on important higher education issues. There are national conversations occurring, and these bills are spot-on in identifying important issues. And we thought it was important to be at all three hearings.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Thank you.

DR. NESPOLI: And so I want to be very brief and see what questions we can respond to from you.

But you remember at the College of New Jersey, President Donohue from Mercer was there and she spoke about the graduation rate

bill, A-2804. And we support the call for a plan to improve graduation rates. She also spoke -- Pat did -- about the performance funding bill, A-676. And as recently -- Glen, I think you were a part of this -- as last week, Pat -- President Donahue convened a working committee of a half a dozen of our presidents who have, in anticipation of looking at that bill, talked to other states, collected data, and have begun to be more specific in their thinking about performance metrics for New Jersey's community colleges.

Ray Yannuzzi -- President Ray Yannuzzi was with you at Rowan and he spoke about others of the bills -- the reverse transfer bill, common course numbering, cap on the number of credits. But I wanted to take my time -- and I'll do this quickly -- to just touch on three bills that-- No kidding, if you look at the national community college conversation and research, there are three bills that the research just shouts out that these three ideas are so important and so critical to helping more students graduate. What are the three? A brief word about each, I promise. A-2800, which is about College Readiness Now; A-2817, which is about dual enrollment; and A-2818, which is about degree plans.

Now, you have 20 bills, I think. This is not to say, by focusing on these three, that the others are unimportant; they are, of course. But these three, our presidents, I think, and our trustees think deserve a special nod and shout-out.

So real quickly: A-2800. It turns out that if we can partner community college faculty with high school teachers, and get to the 9th and 10th graders early on and identify -- as the Bill would direct us to do, and some of this is already occurring -- help those kids who need some catching up, to catch up before they get to us. Now, we're open door, by law -- you

know that. We, by law, must admit all high school graduates. In fact, we must admit all 18-year-olds and older, whether they are a high school graduate or not. We are open door by law, and we're never going to diminish our commitment to that. But coupled with that is a renewed commitment to get into the high schools, as this Bill envisions. And we're doing that in a pilot way right now, with each of our colleges partnering with a local high school.

So we're kicking the tires here. But this Bill would be so important, and we look forward to speaking about it further as it makes its way through the legislative process. To us, this one is spot-on important. Good things will happen if we can help these kids, while they're still in high school, get to college ready before they graduate.

Dual enrollment, the next one -- A-2817; it goes hand-in-hand with the first. The research is crystal clear: If we can help a high school student complete even one -- just one college course while in high school, the chances of that student graduating from college increases dramatically. Just one course. And I'm not just talking about the A students who take the advanced placement courses. We're talking about the B and C students who maybe lack a little confidence, "I'm not sure I can do college." Hudson takes courses into the high school; kids complete one single course while in high school and the lights go on.

Now, we've talked privately -- and I'd be happy to speak more about this -- but we think Maryland has a good model. Our colleges stand ready and are waiving their tuition, in part and more than in part. But just to plant a seed with you as this Bill moves forward, we think it's important that dual enrollment courses be a shared responsibility. Three partners: the

colleges, the schools, and the families who can afford it. So we've talked, Madam Chair. I think the way Maryland does it -- the bit I know about it -- the colleges waive all of the tuition on the front end, and then the schools reimburse the college for up to 75 percent of the tuition. For students who are in need, the schools pay that. And what's the Federal program -- the school lunch program? But then kids from families who have the wherewithal -- they pay the tuition. So it's a three-way partnership, and we'd like to suggest that that bears thinking about. It seems to be working very well in Maryland.

But again, the larger message is: complete even one course and good things happen.

And then lastly, degree plans -- pathways. There probably have been 10 national groups, important groups -- the Ford Foundation and others -- that have released reports saying something that lay people like you, and others that we know in your neighborhoods, would think is common sense -- but sometimes common sense isn't all too commonly found, as my dad used to say. If you can help students early on get a clear plan and a clear pathway to a degree and a job -- as A-2818 envisions -- well, again, really good things happen. Sometimes in life simple is better than complex. And I grew up in the time in our country, in the 1970s, where there were -- it was always "more choice is better" with majors. Well, I think 2818 makes the point that if we can help kids and adults focus on their major, their education plan, their pathway sooner rather than later, again good things can happen.

So we thank you for your strong leadership, we really do, in bringing these State policy issues to our attention, and we're real eager to

work with you more as they make their way forward in the legislative process.

And we'd be happy to answer any questions that you might have.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Thank you very much, Larry and President Gabert.

I do have a couple of questions. And I appreciate what you've done here and this testimony, because you have been travelling with us over the last few years together.

So I like that you've outlined the three, but you don't think that the, let me see, the one where -- the Common Core course numbering or the general ed -- which was suggested that there's just general ed courses throughout the State of New Jersey that no matter what-- So there's ease of transferring from one institution to another; so that if you went from one degree program to another you don't have to take an additional general ed course just because somebody, some institution -- do you understand what I'm saying -- requires it?

DR. NESPOLI: Yes. No, we like that Bill a lot.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Okay.

DR. NESPOLI: If I have it right, 2805, common course numbering. We're blessed in New Jersey; we have a law that encourages, even requires that as community college students -- if they get the associate's degree, when they arrive at New Jersey City University they're guaranteed a junior-level status. That happens through the good cooperation of our presidents and the senior college presidents. But Florida and some other states have gone to a common course numbering. And,



again, common sense-- That doesn't make it easier for students. Well, I'm making this up -- SOC 201 at Hudson and SOC 201 at Jersey City or Rutgers -- it's the same course. But you know, it's common sense, but it is complex to pull that off; Florida and a few have. I'll leave it to the presidents and others to figure out how to get their hands around that, but conceptually it sure would simplify things for students -- but it is complex.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: What about the reverse transfer? Because Dr. Houshmand had mentioned that that was really something that would have a huge impact on a lot of students' lives. Just to be-- In fact, numbers-wise, he said about 2,000 students he could actually attribute and have participate in that reverse transfer program and give them some form of a degree. Which, you know, once you have that piece of paper, that makes you more marketable.

DR. NESPOLI: Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: So on a larger scale, if that's 2,000 in one institution, I'm sure its comparable in all of our institutions of higher learning.

DR. NESPOLI: Well, that too is a really good Bill, and I think President Yannuzzi spoke about it at Rowan -- A-2802. I just saw in yesterday's paper, by the way, that the governor of another state -- I think Michigan -- enrolled himself in a reverse transfer agreement so that he could receive an associate's degree in the same kind of framework.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Give him some credit, that's right, for what he's got.

DR. NESPOLI: And I think what President Houshmand said -- and, boy, we sure appreciated his strong comments about community

colleges at the Rowan hearing -- given New Jersey's geography, a lot of our students, for good reasons -- life is complicated -- will leave the community college before getting the associate's degree -- transfer early. You know, we'd like to have them with us as long as-- Go ahead.

PRESIDENT GABERT: No, what I was going to say, though, if you're looking for reverse transfers you don't have to go any further than this room right here. Sue and I signed a reverse transfer program that is a paradigm we will share with all of you, and we shared it -- we did it in the last year--

**S U S A N H E N D E R S O N, Ph.D:** (off mike) We did.

PRESIDENT GABERT: And I can't tell you how many students are taking advantage of it.

DR. NESPOLI: Beautiful.

PRESIDENT GABERT: So there you go. And you're right on; it's a good thing.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Dr. -- President Sue Henderson from New Jersey City University, would you like to join the others? We'll have the presidents up here.

I'm sure you have some testimony that you wanted to--

DR. HENDERSON: Yes, I want to speak a little bit more. I have a few other things to say, but I do want to talk about the importance of collaborating with community colleges, because very often community colleges do the work that prepares a student so that when they come to our campus they're ready to go. And we have found the students who come from Hudson County Community College are very prepared. They finish in a timely manner and they're very good students. So it's been a win for us.

Now, that has been because the faculty at Hudson County Community College and our faculty work together. We have a dual admit, so a student who may not get into our institution -- because they may have too much remedial work that they need to do -- would come here, finish their remedial work, and then with a certain GPA they then would be accepted into Hudson County Community College. So it's a smooth transfer and, quite frankly, for some students who come from very modest means, coming to a community college makes a lot more financial sense, because he's cheaper than my tuition is. So it might be smarter for a student to start with community college and then transfer.

So it's been a real win for us to have that collaboration, and I've been very excited about it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Do you have any input on the 20-bill package that we are here actually hearing testimony on today?

DR. HENDERSON: Well, one of the programs that I was impressed with was the idea of taking people who have some college, and they haven't finished-- I was on the President's Task Force for Economic Development, and the State of New Jersey is going to be second in the nation in needing undergraduate degrees within the next 10 years -- so we need to do it. But you've got about 250,000 people in this state out there with some college. They need to be able to come back and use some of their life experiences -- let's give them credit for that -- and then finish an associate's degree. That will give them a good job, and then come back and then finish the bachelor's degree.

We already have in place at Thomas Edison University (*sic*) a mechanism to take these individuals and take the things that they've done

-- their life experiences -- and give them college credit for it. They are a national model for it, and they are partnering with the rest of the institutions in the state to say, "Look, we'll do this for you," and then you can either give them Thomas Edison credit, or NJCU credit, or Hudson County Community College credit. So we're working pretty diligently with them in that area.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: That's wonderful.

DR. HENDERSON: We're also working -- which has kind of been an exciting thing -- with a local company here, because we noticed that there are some companies in this city that need people who just need training -- high school students who just need training, and then they need an associate's degree. But then to get up in their job they need to have that bachelor's degree. So we're working with the companies; and Hudson County Community College; as well as NJIT -- because the program is very technical; as well as NJCU. So the students are working on this in high school, they'll get some college credit in high school, but they'll also get training. So that when they graduate from high school they can immediately go to work.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: That's great.

Does anyone on the Committee--

Assemblyman Cryan.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: How are you?

DR. HENDERSON: Good.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Thanks for having us today; it's a great institution. Thanks so much.

And thank you, Dr. Gabert, for the embracement of 2804. We've heard conflicting discussions about whether or not graduation rates are applicable in a community college setting. It's great to hear and to see that you're embracing that concept.

So it's not unreasonable to ask for a plan that simply a third of students have an opportunity for a pathway to graduation -- is essentially what, you're saying. Is that correct?

PRESIDENT GABERT: I am saying that, but I also-- You need to -- and I'm sure you do-- I'm going to speak for Hudson students. The majority come in here with issues of having to build skill levels up to college level -- like the ESL.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Those are your full-time students? Because remember, the folks that we're talking about--

PRESIDENT GABERT: They have to be full-time to have qualified for financial aid -- a lot of financial aid. So the clock starts. If the Federal financial aid program could be modified so they didn't have to be full-time, it could be a different thing.

And the other thing about Hudson, and true with a lot of county colleges, is the economic level of the students: 80 percent of our students qualified for Pell; only about 15 percent of our students take out a checkbook or a credit card and pay for their own full tuition. So you know you're dealing with students who not only may not speak English, or they may need to work on their math or skills, but most of them have to work, in addition, to support a family; and they have to go full-time in order to qualify for financial aid. It's very difficult.

Graduating in two years, for the vast majority of community college students, isn't realistic enough. Now, once they get to the college level, of course, and they complete--

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Well, no community college graduates a third of its full-time students in three years, not two, which I think is still a stunning statistic that we continue to quote.

What I wanted to ask you about was -- and I thank you for the partnership, and I'm going to follow up with Dr. Henderson in a minute -- do you have any sense of those full-time students who arrive to you -- who graduate and get a high school degree in May or June, and come to you in September, who have embraced this Hudson experience -- as to how many of those folks require remedial help, on a percentage basis?

PRESIDENT GABERT: No; a significant number.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Would you say it's more or less than 70 percent?

PRESIDENT GABERT: I don't know the recent graduation-- We have more than 70 percent in remedial, but how many would be coming in not immediately from high school I'd have to find out for you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: So my question to you is -- and that's, by the way, a pretty consistent number among community colleges. And again, to emphasize the point: We're talking about folks who graduated in June and are coming in September; we're not talking about, as I read in today's *Jersey Journal* -- we're not talking about the returning vet, we're not talking about the corporate person who comes back. We're talking about the full-time student.

PRESIDENT GABERT: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: So that we have apples-to-apples and actually some facts.

PRESIDENT GABERT: A significant number.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Significant amount.

So my question to you is this: From the community college level -- which you discussed here, and I'm so excited to see you embrace these bills -- what steps have the community colleges taken in the past and/or what plans do they have with PARCC to deal on a comprehensive solution to the remedial issue?

PRESIDENT GABERT: Well, I'm not sure. We've obviously not done enough. You know, we work with-- You know, a part of the frustration is that we have very little control who comes knocking on our door.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: But, you know, here's-- And I'm honored that we're here in this place today, and that we have an opportunity to have the conversation; I want to be clear about that. The frustration level, I think, from the Committee's and certainly from the sponsors' standpoint is these numbers aren't brand new.

PRESIDENT GABERT: I know.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: And with all due respect, there has been very little done and there's been no comprehensive strategy. And when there's no comprehensive strategy, you get legislation. And my frustration level is, is that even you, who have embraced these concepts when others haven't -- and we thank you for that -- you need a plan. And, frankly, you're the receiving end. We need a plan. And what we've provided here -- and I'm grateful that you took the time to do so -- and my

request to you is that all the county college associations-- And I hope you remain one, I might add.

PRESIDENT GABERT: So do we. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I'll make my pitch now -- I sure hope you do -- that there's developed a cohesive plan out of this, and hopefully the legislation passes.

But there's a significant problem here. And I wanted to bring that point up to you because I think it's fundamentally that one of the two overriding issues here -- we focus on rates or remedial because there's a correlation. Dr. Henderson knows I'm coming here in a minute because we've had some wonderful conversations.

So my question to you is -- my last question to is, in your partnership with New Jersey City University, have you noticed -- and maybe this is more for Dr. Henderson -- we've heard -- the Committees, both Higher Ed committees -- have heard different levels of remediation assistance needed at the four-year publics from community college graduates. And I used the term *graduate* -- completed, not a transfer after a class or two -- so we have our facts-to-facts. We heard one higher ed president of a major university in this state say that the majority of students that he receives in his university require remedial help when they arrive at the door -- 60 percent was the number he quoted -- which was a staggering figure. I want you to think about that. A community college degree, get it in May, go into a higher ed four-year public, transfer the degrees, and 6 out of 10 need remedial help. That's what we're talking about here. It's a fundamental problem that's not being addressed cohesively that I can see. And frankly, Assemblywoman Riley's taken the leadership role here.



So my question to you is this. With your partnership with New Jersey City University, is there an analysis and data collection of the students who are coming from Hudson, is there an analysis of where there's remedial help required, is there a cohesive strategy to provide that remedial help and fall back -- much like something that maybe we could embrace, whether it's in this legislation, and potentially look back, the next level down, towards high schools? Is there anything as part of your partnership that represents that?

PRESIDENT GABERT: Let me respond to that, but I have to say the one with high school-- I mean, part of the issue we have there is that we are open door. We do not have a lot of control who comes knocking on our door. And we can work with various high schools -- and I would say we have 12 districts in Hudson County -- and, you know, I mean, there would be different degrees of success with different high schools.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: But in your 22 years as President, I assume -- and please correct me -- I assume that what you see are patterns of students who come to you. They tend to come over time; you know where they're coming from, you tend to know a demographic model. You spoke about ESL here. So I am assuming -- and please correct me -- that you can pretty much identify the patterns and behaviors of students who are coming and knocking on your door.

PRESIDENT GABERT: Yes, we can. We can also identify them by community and groups as well.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Okay, so if we can do that, can we take it to the next level and work on the remediation support that's there to provide that student the opportunity for success on an earlier pathway?

PRESIDENT GABERT: I think you can, but, I mean, the issue is we can work with the K-12s, but it's really has to be one of persuasion. We don't have the teeth for that.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: And I guess sitting here -- and then I'll ask Dr. Henderson, and I promise, Chair, that'll be it -- but sitting here, we're tired of waiting for somebody to ask, you know? And it's just been way too long. And the rates show that-- And you mentioned in your talks, folks are-- When you have a 70 to 80 percent Pell grant eligible-type population and they're losing that opportunity to graduate in a timely manner, they're not graduating. The stats speak for themselves: less than a third graduate community colleges.

And, again, we're honored to be here. It's pretty clear that if folks aren't ready they ain't gonna finish, so to speak, and that pattern needs to change. And that's been a focus of the Committee, a focus of leadership. And if I could ask you, as somebody who's incredibly respected and I've heard your name around this state -- without sounding patronizing -- we need guys like you to take a leadership role and fix this thing, because, frankly, our stuff simply asks for a path.

PRESIDENT GABERT: It's a-- I'll just make an observation. It's a politically sensitive issue for the President of a public community college to come out and lobby against the public school districts in the county. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I can tell you, the politics of higher ed is a fascinating little thing.

PRESIDENT GABERT: Indeed it is.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: So Dr. Henderson, have you analyzed, as part of the partnerships --- and then I wanted to ask two quick questions -- Doctor, have you analyzed in your partnership agreements the data of the students coming in? Has there been any -- and to backtrack to the question I asked Dr. Gabert. And then there are other partnerships around the state. Were they utilized as a model? Is there kind of -- lack of a better way of put it -- a *pro forma* way to do this, or are they all going to be individual partnerships with specific schools? We saw, for example, Dr. Ali Houshmand and he said that Rowan University is now -- actually, Gloucester is actually Rowan University at Gloucester.

DR. HENDERSON: Not interested, by the way. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: So I was just wondering if you could talk about that as to whether or not-- There you go, there you go, right?

DR. HENDERSON: Not interested.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: You lose a school -- but hey, they can cook. They'd be able to cook at NJCU.

DR. HENDERSON: No, no, no. I will tell you. So I think you asked me three different kinds of questions: one has to do with what does the pipeline look like, and I'll just go ahead and say K-16 -- you know, what does it look like -- the students who show up either at Hudson County Community College's doorstep or my doorstep, and are they ready or not for college?

And as we all know, that's a national problem. And there are ways that I've seen institutions of higher education help solve it. But because, as the President indicated, that's not our purview -- we are more

influencers than we are mandating -- and some of the ways that it can influence is something that we're doing right now at Schneider High School. We're creating, within Schneider High School, a school-within-a-school. It's an Institute for Student Achievement School and they have a track record of graduating 95 percent of their students from high school, and 85 percent of those go onto college. And I'm working with a woman who does that program -- she does it all over the country -- because I want to make sure that those students, when they show up at either your door or my door, they're college ready so that there will be no remediation.

But that's 400 students. Now, what do you do with a system that has nine high schools here and how do you solve that problem? And I think it is a matter of just working with those high schools during the summer. We're part of a program where -- working with the local legislators here, setting something up where students better understand what college is about and what it means they need to be doing during high school.

We are doing something called a Proyecto Science program, which is funded both by a grant we have as well as the local school systems, where high school students come in and understand what it means to do high school (*sic*) science research. Because students who are more likely to do, sort of, hands on science are much more interested in studying science. But these are-- As you said, it's not a systemic thing; I mean, it's not solving all the problems, but it's doing it, as I call it, *one student at a time*.

The other piece that I think is important to recognize, whether it's my institution or Hudson County Community College, is that every fall when first-time, full-time freshman -- which is the data point that we are all being measured on -- when they show up at the door, they are not all 18

years old having graduated from their local high school three months earlier. Many of them have gone and wandered around and done some things, and gotten the epiphany in the summer that college would be a great thing to do, right?

PRESIDENT GABERT: That's right.

DR. HENDERSON: Or some of them have gone and worked in their local McDonald's for a year or two and said, "You know what? I'm tired of doing this. I want to go back to college." So anything that they learn in high school we're going to have to, kind of, refresh that.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Would that take more than a semester to do for somebody?

DR. HENDERSON: It depends on how they left high school. Which gets to my third piece, of how we are trying to retreat the remediation that we deal with -- not with the students who come to us from Hudson County Community College, because we don't really have that problem. Our faculty work with this faculty to say, "This is what Chemistry I looks like, and this is what we need for you to be doing in that class," so that when they come here, they're ready. And that's what we should be doing; it's a collaboration.

So you asked-- The answer to the remediation thing-- So we have students who show up here at NJCU who need remediation, and it's a large percentage.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Seventy-eight, right?

DR. HENDERSON: Yes, it is. So what we're trying to do is to get it where we look to see, what is it that they don't know? You take a placement test and there may be 20 things that you're supposed to know to

be able to get into college algebra. Of the 20 things you need to know, maybe you know 12 of them. Why do I need to go back and teach you those 12 things again? Why don't I just spend the summer teaching you the 8 you don't know, and then remediate you so you can begin your college-level courses earlier?

So that's something the faculty at NJCU are working on in the math department, and we're looking at doing similar things in the writing area.

The other piece of it we have recognized -- I don't know of an industry out there that doesn't say college graduates really don't write very well. So we are in-- The faculty are very interested in doing writing all four years, in all courses -- so making that really a big priority.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Last comment, because I know Celeste gets tired of my talking. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Wait, I'm just tired because I got up so early this morning to be here at 10:00 a.m. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Ten? Oh, okay.

And I do want to note this, because I have a bill that, to be candid, I sponsored that says if you don't graduate 50 percent -- and you're in the front line of that, Dr. Henderson, and it's safe to say we've had a conversation about it.

DR. HENDERSON: Yes, we've had a conversation.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I do want to recognize -- you've spent \$1.1 million in your responses on remedial -- which, by the way, is higher than any higher ed public with the exception of Rutgers--

DR. HENDERSON: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: --so there's a focus on it. The frustration is, sitting as a little old Assemblyman, is that not only do you have an issue, but at least to me it's a direct correlation to graduation. One of the correlations of all the community colleges is there is a high remedial rate and there are lousy graduation rates. With all due respect, a 78 remediation and a 37 percent 6-year graduation rate and, let's face it, less than stellar in 4 years, is -- at least to me, you can put A and B together. There are other factors, but it's fair.

DR. HENDERSON: So there are problems on both ends.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Yes, but my point is, is that-- I guess what I want to implore -- wherever this legislation goes -- is the idea that there's a cohesive plan from the President's Council, from the community colleges that-- I get it; you have an open door. You don't control everybody who comes to you. But they come to you. So there are two things: one, is a culture that creates a culture of success and graduation; and two, is a culture of consistency. It would be really nice if the President's Council walked in here and said, "Here's what we're going to do about remedial, statewide. And this is the plan we have that you guys should really kind of stay out of our way of." That would be really nice. And with all due respect, it's been years, and years, and years of the same.

And my last question to you is, is knowing that PARCC is on the table, has there been any plan from Jersey City State -- excuse me, Jersey City University -- I apologize, old school -- and the county colleges on an analysis of PARCC and how not just to read the data, but how you're going to implement it for student success?

DR. HENDERSON: You go ahead.

DR. NESPOLI: With Dr. Gabert's permission here, PARCC-- Let me tell you what we have done and, Assemblyman, at the second hearing, I think it was, you made the point -- a good point -- that it would be a good thing if the community colleges worked together on a common approach as to remediation. And we agree with that. I didn't get a chance to say that at Rowan, but I wanted to say it here and tell you what we have done. And I want to get to the PARCC point.

Because I think the PARCC and the Common Core does present a moment of opportunity. So about six months ago -- maybe a year now -- we brought our 19 community college math remedial faculty leaders together and our 19 remedial English faculty together -- reading and writing. We asked them to bring their course outlines and their course syllabi, and we spent a full day with the math people, the writing people, the reading people sharing -- and all for the purpose of the points you made: getting them more on the same page as to how to do remediation. At the same time we did an analysis; we looked at the PARCC standards -- we didn't just read them-- because in a perfect world, if you think about it, the community college -- or a senior college remediation, for that matter -- ought to mirror the PARCC. Now, the little bit I know about PARCC -- I know more than a little bit -- but to be candid, it's a great challenge to our public schools because it's an increasing of standards. You know, the HSPA test that is being phased out -- High School Proficiency Assessment -- you know, the current lay of that land is what Dr. Gabert described at the meeting: We have too many students coming to us not college ready. So we have brought our folks together, we've looked at the PARCC in a comprehensive way, and the Common Core standards, and over time -- how



much time, we don't know yet -- but we're trying to move -- revise our remediation programs so that they mirror PARCC. So that when a student successfully completes -- I say PARCC, Common Core; I shouldn't use those interchangeably -- when a high school student successfully shows that they've met the Common Core, that student would mirror the student who comes out of remediation. In both cases they would be ready -- fully ready for college.

So we are -- we're with you; it's complicated work, but we're at it; we're at the task.

PRESIDENT GABERT: May I make an observation too? I don't want to sound offensive or anything. This year marks my 43rd year in community college education. I started in Chicago, and I started my career -- I lived in a community very much like Hudson County. And the college I started working with when I started there in the 1970s -- the developmental rate was 25 percent. It's where ours is now. And the interesting thing about community colleges in the last 40 years -- just by the way the Federal aid and other things have gone -- we have added to our mission the developmental programs in a much bigger dose. I'm not saying that it's good or bad; but, you know, we have the transfer and the various things, but developmental, it's there. And it's a huge group. And here's the dilemma. I mean, the reality is, Assemblyman, there are folks coming in there -- just a profile -- that they're not going to finish. But they knock on our door, and it's open enrollment. I'm not using that as an excuse, but the reality is there is nowhere else to serve those persons. And they do come through our programs; well, they might not graduate, but they are better off with their experience here. And that is not refuting anything that you're

saying; I agree with what you're saying. But that's also the other hard reality.

And the fascinating thing with registration, for example, for our students-- When we went to college, it wasn't like this. We will register 25 or 30 percent of our students in the last two weeks. I mean, can you imagine? When we were in school, you planned it; do you remember -- we signed up, you go buy your books early. It's an entirely different operation.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I hear you, but it's hard to believe that 7 out 10 can't finish in three years. It's just staggering to believe that, consistently, around this state.

PRESIDENT GABERT: Well, and I think the other hard issue may be to look who's-- One of the ways to control the students' success is to control who comes in the door. That, I think, is the dilemma here we're dealing with.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I just hope that-- You called it a moment of opportunity. Over the years there have been other tests; they've all seemed -- at least from this little legislator's standpoint -- as moments of delay. I hope this one isn't a moment of delay, and I hope it's a moment of opportunity, because it's getting mighty frustrating out there.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: I hear what Assemblyman Cryan is saying; I understand where you're coming from. I think it's a little bit more complicated in your scenarios and in a lot of scenarios that you're approached with, especially when you bring in the fact that you have to accept-- You have students who are coming to you who are not necessarily coming out of high school, who are being remediated. And so you are being graded.

We're really just looking, though, not only for student success, but also for that first-time, full-time student. So that would be the one who is coming out of high school with remediation -- or should have had remediation. And that's why there is a bill here that does address the actual cut score in the high school level, Larry, supportive of that.

So I understand where you're coming from; I am an educator myself. Going through the PARCC process ourselves, going through the Common Core, understanding that we're now, as a State, we're even-- I think it's funny that, as a State, we've signed onto Common Core in 2010, and it's almost during this implementation process that everyone is like saying, "Oh, wait a second. Is that what we're supposed to be doing?" and, "Let's slow down, let's slow down."

I commend you for what you do, everything that you do.

And Dr. Henderson, I invited you up; did you have an opening statement, remarks, or-- I wasn't sure if you wanted to say anything. (laughter)

DR. HENDERSON: Well, I do want to spend a couple of minutes talking about thanking you, because one of the things I was so delighted about when I came here two years ago to work in New Jersey's higher educational system is the autonomy. I worked both in New York and in the state of Georgia, and both of those are different systems and they are less autonomous in very different ways -- but they are certainly less autonomous. And the beauty of my job now is that I can be more creative and I think more helpful to students in helping them finish, because I have the ability to do that.

The piece that I see that is frustrating to Assemblyman Cryan is that why can't the nine (*sic*) presidents decide? And in many cases, we do. And a good example of that is what we are doing with Thomas Edison, because we recognize these 250,000 people who are living in our state who have some college need to finish. Thomas Edison has stepped up and said, "Look, why don't I help you all?" And they have a task force that we're all working on together.

That is something that I think is a quick fix; and it's a quick fix not only for us, but for the community colleges.

I think, in terms of making sure that this institution -- NJCU, in particular -- is particularly, what I call, *relevant and vibrant* in this particular community is to understand what Jersey City is about. It's a very vibrant community; it's going through a lot of change and, at the same time, it has a lot of students and families who need to be served. So we have a responsibility in both those ends, which is why we're trying to do a lot of work in the high schools to get them better so that they do have less remediation.

The other piece that we're doing at NJCU that I'm very excited about -- our graduation rate was based on the fact that students came in and went through a remedial system that might not have been the most efficient in the world. And we required students to have 128 credits to graduate, because our general education was 66 credits instead of the usual 44. Our faculty now have gotten it down to 44, which means it will take only 120 credits to graduate.

Just do the math of it; it's easier to finish. So the new mantra on campus now is, "Fifteen and four." Take 15 credits a semester to

graduate in four years. Fifteen and four is what it's going to be on campus. The way that has to happen, though, because my students -- just as they are a Hudson County Community College -- many of them work; many of them don't work one part-time job, they might work three. But I've always worked in institutions where that's true.

You solve the following problem in the following way. You do a lot of fundraising so that you can give them a little bit of aid or you have them work on campus. Those two things get them down from the three part-time jobs down to the two. The other thing it does is, you make sure that when they do an internship -- which they really need to do to get a good job when they graduate -- make sure you pay that internship. The company's not going to pay it; you need to pay a stipend to them. Because they are time out from whatever they're doing; they're not going to be able to do their minimum wage job because they're having to do the internship. So we are really implementing a lot of internships that are *a)* meaningful, and *b)* we're trying to do them with a stipend. But we're doing that through some fundraising and through some grants that we've been able to get through Title V.

We've been very excited about doing the reverse transfer and the dual admit with Hudson County Community College, and we're branching out to start doing that now with Bergen and some of the other community colleges with whom we get a lot of students.

I'm very excited about the things that are going on, on campus. We have a new school of business that I think is going to be very relevant to this area because this is the Financial District of this state. And the faculty that we have in that area actually kind of got their degrees, but they did

most of their work down on Wall Street. So they have a lot of work experience and they bring those connections back to campus. Which is why our SIM group -- we have a Student Investment Management group that was given \$100,000 about six or seven years ago from Congressman Frank Guarini, and they are asked every year to invest it in stocks. They won a national competition last year, beating institutions like Harvard and Stanford because they had the best portfolio. This year, that particular portfolio is worth \$206,000 -- they've doubled their investment. I told them I need to invest my money with them. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: That's right.

DR. HENDERSON: I've talked about the 250,000 people-- The other thing I need for you to be aware of is our institution gives out about \$1.8 million a year in student aid. A student who comes to us, who comes from very modest means, can effectively go free because by the time they get their TAG and their Pell there's not much left. We help subsidize some of that, because of their textbooks, through some of the other scholarships that we hand out. But we've been very proud of the amount of scholarship aid that we've been able to provide to students, because it allows them to focus on their studies.

There a lot of good things going on, on campus. We have a lot of strength in music, dance, and theater. We're very excited about that, and engaging more with the community here and getting those students out into the community. If you happen to go see *Porgy and Bess* down in Princeton in the next few weeks, some of our students are in the play.

I'm very proud of being there, I'm very proud of our students. And there is a lot of exciting things going on.

But some of it is thanks to you. We're doing a science building -- the funding that you've done. We will be building our own academic building, and we just had a meeting this morning about the new residence hall that we're putting up that will be opening in 2016. So we want to thank you for your support in that area.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: I thank you very much for your testimony.

Any other Committee members? (no response)

Now I have--

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Can I just ask one question?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: You go ahead.

ASSEMBLYMAN AUTH: Finish yours first.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: You sure?

I'd like to ask your comments on the tuition and fee freeze bill. Fees at New Jersey City University -- you just talked about its affordability and the need for students to work when they go to schools. Fees have increased here, since 2009, 30 percent; the average higher ed New Jersey public tuition fee on six years is over 23 percent. So if we did a tuition freeze we would literally, if you would accept six-year graduation rates -- which I don't -- but if you do, you'd save 23 percent if we did it.

What is the difficulty in managing a budget if we do a tuition and fee freeze for incoming freshman -- especially given the difficulty that you just spoke about, and the need for these students to go to school and to work -- where they're not receiving 30 percent increases over time? Frankly, a lot of them, let's face it, are working minimum wage and hustling for a

buck. If they can't grow at that level, is there a problem, in your eyes, with being able to manage a tuition and fee freeze for those students and possibly help them complete their college sooner?

DR. HENDERSON: So let me answer the question a couple of ways.

As I said, students who come from modest means effectively go to NJCU free. Where they run into a bump is that they don't finish in a timely manner. They need to get done, which is why we're taking this time-to-degree completion and shortening it up.

The budgetary model that most institutions of higher education use assumes tuition; and that's whether it's tuition that you get from Pell and TAG, or whether it's tuition that you get from the students writing a check. Like Hudson County Community College, we don't have a lot of students who are actually writing their own checks. They work the two and three jobs because they have families at home, and I can't solve that problem. That's my clientele, and so they have to continue to do that. What I need to make sure I'm doing is providing them the right kind of learning environment so they can get through, and get a good education, and get a good job from that.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: But my question was, is what's the problem -- if there's a problem; and maybe there's isn't. I mean, you indicated that there seems to be some stability in cost to the average student. Is there a problem with providing an incoming, full-time freshman student with a none-year semester freeze for their costs of tuition and fees so they can budget appropriately? If they have families, that makes it, frankly, even more important unless--



DR. HENDERSON: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Remember, these are full-time students we're talking about for the measurement; I want to emphasize that.

What is the problem in terms of managing a tuition and fee freeze bill, given the population that you have?

DR. HENDERSON: So we manage our budget as a business based on what happens with, what I would call, increases in -- *cost of living increases*. So what it costs us to do business -- the cost of it increases every year. So I'd have to figure out a way to solve that problem. So Microsoft doesn't really--

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I appreciate that. And this is with the greatest of respect, and it's going to sound antagonistic. But a business is-- I get the business model on the financial end, but on the outcomes end, when it's horribly low after 4 years, it's 37 percent after 6, no business would start with 78 percent of their folks unqualified for the job, which is what you do with remedial. And we're supposed to accept the business model on the financial end, but not on the other end; and it's a very difficult thing to accept after a while.

There are-- I know this is a soapbox -- but if you take a look at higher ed today, it's close to 35,000 students in higher ed today -- if you accept and look at the data on folks who are taking loans and going into debt from day one, who will leave higher ed, have a debt, and no degree to associate with that. And that has affected, literally, a generation of students. So to me it's frustrating because I've heard it not only from yourself, but from other presidents. "Well, from a business model, it's

unacceptable.” What’s unacceptable is the completed product. And I know nobody likes the 50 percent bill, because, “How dare you think about closing a school?” But if it was a business, Doctor, it would be closed.

DR. HENDERSON: Right. But I don’t disagree with you about getting the completion rates up. That is our singular focus where I am right now. That is what we are going to be working on. But I will tell you that I can’t get it to change immediately because the students are in the pipeline.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: You and I have chatted about that, and I’m very appreciative of the fact that you’re trying to turn the big frigate.

DR. HENDERSON: Five years from now--

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I absolutely get it. Which is why the bill only says--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Give you some time, right?

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: By the way, be very clear. All the bill asks for is a payoff by 2020.

DR. HENDERSON: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: So it’s not asking for an immediate thing.

DR. HENDERSON: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: And why shouldn’t we have some accountability for it?

DR. HENDERSON: Correct. Because the six-year rate -- the people who graduate next June started long before I started at this institution. So--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I absolutely accept your challenge, and I'm grateful that you're taking it on. But from where we're sitting, with all due respect, there's no consistent plan on remedial; there's no real plan on a focus on graduation rates; there's horrific outcry at the idea of closing a school, but yet we want a business model for our financial needs and it's an extremely -- part of the frustration from some of us with a microphone.

DR. HENDERSON: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Okay.

DR. HENDERSON: So what I hear a solution would be, at the very least, would be a consistent plan on the remedial.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I don't know how else to make-- A plan on remedial, instead of affordability being about-- Look, the cheapest way-- The best way to make college more affordable is to complete it on time.

DR. HENDERSON: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Okay? It's the most fundamental way to do it.

DR. HENDERSON: Of course.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: All right? And, frankly, have an expectation that when you start you're actually going to finish, all right? Those are-- Families can live with that. And, right now, frankly, schools that tend to serve a population of lower middle class, I'll say, and middle class schools in New Jersey -- that's not the picture. And I know you're trying to turn a frigate, so to speak. But the reality is, is there are tens of thousands of students who are out there with loans and no degrees; never

mind the ones who have degrees and the loans are staggering -- all right? -- which is what folks talk about. They forget about the other part of the population who are affecting the economy in this state in ways that are significant -- significant. And it needs to change. And I sure would like to see-- I'd like to see the Presidents' Council embrace a freeze or some sort of cost control. Because, guess what, 30 percent over 5 years -- which is what I think 2009 to today is, at least over at (Indiscernible) College it was -- is staggering. And those folks working can't handle it. So something needs to be done at that level. We've offered a solution; I'd like to hear a better one because, frankly, I haven't heard one yet.

Thanks, Doctor -- politely. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Assemblyman Auth.

ASSEMBLYMAN AUTH: Thank you, Chairman, through you.

First of all, thank you for your hospitality today. Your facilities are absolutely to be admired.

I'd like to switch gears for a moment. We've been talking about bridging from community college to a regular four-year school. I'd like to talk about bridging from the four-year school, or the termination of graduation from community college to the workforce. That concerns me.

Assemblyman Cryan has all the numbers for a lot of these things; I wouldn't be surprised if he has these numbers too. But I'm not normally on this Committee, so I might refer to him -- excuse me, defer to him for some help on this.

But I read recently an article from *New Jersey Business and Industry*. And the article -- it wasn't very long -- but they went on to some extent about how the workforce -- the new workforce, the one that they

anticipate using as the economy starts to pick up again -- is woefully unprepared for what they're going to need to be doing. And they expressed it in the most severe terms.

So my question to you is, what exactly are you doing to prepare our students for the expected increase in economic activity in our state? What you're doing or, if you're not, what do you expect to start doing to accommodate what businesses are going to be needing here in New Jersey and throughout the metropolitan area?

PRESIDENT GABERT: One of the things we have here at the college is a Business and Industry institute; most community colleges have that. It's in this building on the 5th floor. And these are services to businesses, and people to do this. So I mean, this is contract training; some are with government grants through the State partnership that Governor McGreevey set up several years ago. We contract with a lot of employers to do that, so we've put several thousand people through that. Most people are employed, getting a better job; or unemployed with jobs the goal there. So we do a lot of training for the job market that doesn't come through the credit division.

And then in our programs, it would all depend on the program. In the Culinary Arts program we have about 100 percent placement. So they're either placed into jobs or they go onto college for their degrees in the culinary-- One of the challenges we have in the culinary program, interestingly enough, is to persuade students not to get a job before they graduate. For a lot of our students coming from middle class families it's to educate them, "Do not drop out in the middle of your second year.

Complete the program; someday you'll be grateful for it," or persuade that student to get the degree because they can go on.

We have spectacular placers, like in our nursing programs -- spectacular placement. It varies with the program.

And I would also say this. You know, something you don't think about on the developmental issue -- and take ESL. You know, somebody may come in here as an ESL student for a year or two -- not graduate at all, but they may be speaking English well enough by the time they get out of there to complete a job -- to get a job. A lot of our students coming in do not speak English well enough to even fill out a job application. So they come here over a two-year period and do that.

I don't have numbers on the general graduation rates, but I would say it depends on the program. Like most community colleges we try very hard to monitor that.

DR. HENDERSON: So some of things that we're doing is internships, because we-- There's a lot of data that shows students who are involved in either the co-op experience or internships are far more likely to get a meaningful job when they graduate, for a couple of reasons: They've already connected in a meaningful way with business, and somebody has a connection on what they're work ethic is like; and they've learned a little bit more what it means to be in the workforce. So we're really pushing the internships.

Obviously, students who are in a nursing program like Hudson County Community College are nurses once they graduate. They're RN to BSN so they are already in demand. Many of them are coming back because they are nurses where their hospitals have said, "You need to get

the bachelors degree.” So it’s been a real win for us. Some of them go onto graduate school because they really realize that they would like to do something that’s more in health sciences; they want to be managers when they’re through.

Some of our students when they graduate get involved with our entrepreneurship program and have actually started their own businesses at our BDI. So if you go to our BDI, what you see there are a number of the people who are our graduates, who finished our degree program in media arts, and they’re running a business now and kind of stepping that up, piece by piece.

A thing that you might find that is-- You read nationally, what is it that businesses are looking for? It is writing skills, and it is critical thinking skills, and our new general education program, which the faculty is working on, really gets to that. The students then go on to their major program, where they then not only take those skills and apply them to history, or political science, or business, or security studies--

The other thing that’s true about NJCU is that it has a reputation for providing what I would call a *practical education*. So students who graduate from NJCU in criminal justice very often end up in our police force, or they might end up in the FBI. We have a security studies program where the students there do go straight on into those agencies and very often will come back to work on their masters or their doctorates in that, simply because they’re again trying to get higher up.

The business program -- they go on in marketing, they go on in working in the businesses. What we’re looking to see is to make sure that they are employed, and they are not, what I would call, *underemployed*. So if

they have a degree in marketing, they're in the kind of business, they're in the kind of job that really matches what they got a degree in -- or matches at the pay.

You would find, if you look at the data nationally, that's not been true for the last four years because the economy has not been good. So people have left really fine institutions with great reputations and have not been able to get a job or have been what they call *underemployed*. But as we look to see the economy growing and getting better, I'm hoping that-- I think we're trying to track and make sure that happens. So we're trying to do a much more thorough job of looking at that, and giving students early experiences working with businesses and our alumni who run businesses.

ASSEMBLYMAN AUTH: Thank you very much.

DR. NESPOSI: Just real quickly -- one thing that comes to my mind, and hearing your question -- the Speaker, Speaker Prieto, has introduced a group of bills -- I think they're being heard tomorrow -- around the importance of technical training. And they make the point -- and I think the BIA has made this point -- that even over the past several years as the country has pulled out of this recession with 7, 8, and 9 percent unemployment, there are many employers -- small manufacturers in New Jersey, for example -- that can't find quality technicians. And so the point is, the community colleges are working with the vo-tech schools, for example, to get people aware that there are good jobs -- pathways to good jobs that require some college but maybe not even an associate's degree; maybe a certificate, and maybe not a bachelor's degree. As much as we want people to aspire for as much education as they want. So I think that's something to keep in mind too, and the Speaker's bills capture that well.



DR. HENDERSON: Let me give you an example of that. So we have students who are majoring in finance and yet-- We have a woman on our faculty who is really remarkable. She's a certified financial planner, she's helped put the curriculum together for the certification. So our students can take, as part of their tracks, a certification while they're doing that. So they finish the degree in finance, but they well know that what they're going to do when they finish is to be a certified financial planner, which is-- It's a solid job that they know they can have for a long time -- which is nice -- it's very reliable.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Thank you very much.

Assemblywoman Jasey.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: I don't want to prolong the discussion. I think you've covered a lot of the issues that I have questions about. And I think what you're hearing is we're reflecting the frustration of many of our constituents -- especially parents and students. And I don't think the onus can be placed entirely on the community colleges or the four-year schools, but I think it's a shared responsibility. I think pre-K to 12 needs to be coordinated much better with pre-K to 16.

And I'm glad that you mentioned PARCC and the Common Core, because I think all of these things coming together if we implement them well. If we do it the way we should do it, we shouldn't be having these conversations later. We should only be talking about the nontraditional students who are struggling to finish, because students coming out of our high schools should be ready to pursue a career or college upon graduation.

So that's my world view, and I think we have a lot of work to do. I'm glad you mentioned the vo-tech package that we're discussing tomorrow in Committee. I think all of these are programs that, if we find a way to put them together so that we're not working in silos, we should see pretty quickly an improvement. Because if our students have the skills they need-- I know when I go to the vo-tech schools I'm blown away by not just the rigor of the academics, but also the fact that students actually are obtaining skills that lead to real jobs.

I also think that we need to do a lot more with internships and placements so that students have a better idea. Because let's face it, I mean, how many of us knew what we wanted to do when we were in college? It took a while. Now it's too expensive to take a while to do those things. You have to have a much better idea. Maybe we need to talk about a way for students to take a year after high school to do something out in the real world before they enter college, so that when they go to college -- if that's what they chose to do -- they have a better focus.

So those are my general comments. I'm really interested in hearing more, but I don't want to prolong the afternoon. And I want to thank you all for coming. This is my second time here in this building, and it is a great building and I think it's an exciting place to be.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Assemblyman.

ASSEMBLYMAN MUKHERJI: Thank you, Madam Chair, through you.

No questions; they've been asked. I'm actually at the pleasure of substituting onto this Committee for Tom Giblin. But it's been extraordinarily valuable, and I think it can inform also some of the work we

do, where I have the privilege of joining Assemblyman Cryan to sit on the Budget Committee.

Just a quick hometown thank you. Glen, obviously, has been here since 1992. The institution that hosts us today has been transformed on your watch and I'm grateful for that. I'm not calling Glen old, but Dr. Henderson has only been with us a year-and-a-half in Hudson County and has already undertaken a number of laudable initiatives. And so I do look forward to continuing to work with both of you.

And thank you for appearing here today; it's been a pleasure for me.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: All right, thank you very much. Enjoy the rest of your day.

ALL: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: All right, next I'd like to hear from John Gunkel, Vice Chancellor for Academic Services, Rutgers-Newark; and Jean Rash, Director of Financial Aid, Rutgers University.

Good afternoon, and thank you very much for coming today.

**J O H N   G U N K E L,   Ph.D.:** Well, thank you all very much.

I thank you, Chair, and the entire Committee for giving us this opportunity and the forum to talk about higher education issues facing the State.

I think that in light of the very energetic and I think engaging, for me, conversation between the Committee members, and Dr. Nespoli, and Dr. Henderson, and Dr. Gabert, I think I'm going to put my prepared remarks aside. Gloria can make sure to distribute them. I really just want

to build on, I think, one particular point, and then I will turn it over to my colleague. And then we'll be happy to answer any questions.

But one of the things I really want to emphasize -- and it's really built on my own experience, both at Rutgers University-Newark, as well as previously before coming to Rutgers -- I worked in the Maryland higher education system, and some of the initiatives to which I think-- The early versions, to which I think Dr. Nespoli was alluding to. I worked, in particular, at University of Maryland, University College, which was a baccalaureate-granting institution, but that really focused on serving nontraditional students -- particularly active duty military personnel. We ran programs at military bases around the world.

And so, you know, working at a baccalaureate institution in that context, as well as at Rutgers University-Newark -- where half of our incoming class every year is transfer students, three-quarters of whom are from New Jersey's community college, and two-thirds of our graduating class are transfer students -- I've worked a lot, sort of, on the receiving end at institutions with transfer. And so I just want to talk a little bit from that experience.

And echoing -- Dr. Henderson and Dr. Gabert mentioned their experiences in terms of collaborating. And there was reference also to collaboration between Rowan and Gloucester. And, of course, at Rutgers University-Newark we have those also with Essex, but with many of the other New Jersey's community colleges outside of Essex County as well.

And these relationships -- these sort of bilateral collaborations are great. But one of the things where I think that the State, the Legislature, the higher education Commission -- where I think they can

really help and can really place a lot of added value to our efforts, is to try to broaden these so that these discussions, these collaborations, aren't bilateral; that they are actually statewide.

The students do not simply come through -- even transfer students do not simply follow a straight path going from this particular county college to this particular four-year institution that happens to be nearby. Students move around from county colleges. In my guise overseeing admissions, I'll see people who have three, four, five different transcripts from schools before they come to Rutgers University-Newark -- and many of whom will be in the state as well as elsewhere. And so I think that there is a place full faith and credit helps, common course numbering helps understand. But there are also pitfalls when learning outcomes, for example, can be different; when students are expected to do different things at different institutions. When I was on the-- In Maryland, in the 1990s, there were statewide faculty committees by discipline. And what we were expected to do was take a look at the different curricula in mathematics, in writing, in history, in the different areas. And the number of different approaches just between the schools within the state of Maryland was very broad, and there was just a lot of opportunity and we saw students falling into those gaps. Some schools would really only emphasize, kind of, mastery -- grasping the content; others would emphasize being able to manipulate it through, sort of, statistical methods, through other analytical methods. And if you came through a class -- having expected to take a prerequisite as a transfer course -- where you had one approach that didn't, say, emphasize the analytical methods, and you came into a course that had

this as a prerequisite, where the instructor was expecting this -- you had a long way to go; a very, very long way to go.

And so I think that my experience in Maryland was that these committees helped to set a -- move the curriculum from common numberings and common names to a more common content. It was a lot of work, I'll say that for sure. As a Chair at the time, I was the person who was doing a lot of it. But even within Rutgers University-Newark we are-- The Education Trust is about to issue a profile on us for moving the graduation rates in about a 10-year period. We have a lot of fluctuation, but if you take a 3-year average, it increased about 17 percent.

There were a lot of things that we did to do that; I mean, you can't put your finger on one thing. Part of it was embracing the diversity of the campus and changing some of the campus culture. One of the really basic things was, we got the people who are teaching our developmental math courses and our developmental writing courses talking to the people who are teaching the upper level writing courses, and the upper level math courses -- deep, deep things, right? (laughter) -- obvious. But at the same time, in order to be able to-- We had people who were placing in the lower level developmental courses over a 3-year period -- a 2-year course sequence over a 3-year period -- so, again, time and a half -- where in some of the areas they were only completing the sequence at a rate of 17 to 23 percent, you know? And if you have 20, 30, 40 percent of your incoming class placing into those developmental classes, that just caps the graduation rates, you know? No wonder we were kind of leveled out at about 46, 47, 48 percent.

Creating a gap, bringing people together-- We actually dissolved the department and put things under a common guide -- helped to improve that so that the rates are now much closer to-- Actually our campus graduation rate is around upper 60s -- 67, 68, 70 percent. Still a lot of room to go. We're still talking about 6-year rates.

I think one of the things that Assemblyman Cryan was great to emphasize is moving-- One of the best ways to address that situation is focusing again on 4-year graduation rates for baccalaureate institutions. So there's a lot more to go. But I think that those kinds of conversations within institutions, and particularly for transfer students across institutions, are absolutely vital. And I think that the Committee, the Legislature, the State of New Jersey can, I think, help to create those sorts of forms like Maryland has, like Illinois has, like Washington state has, like many other states have created for their institutions of higher education.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: All right.

Anybody have questions?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: A quick comment.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Hi, just a very quick comment.

I am recalling a conversation in a visit I had about three or four years ago to Bloomfield College. And they were dealing with this issue of remediation and, I believe, this goes back to what Dr. Henderson -- I believe her name is -- said earlier; and that is, they were finding a way -- they were working on a way, a strategy, to make the remediation very specific.

DR. GUNKEL: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: And I'm wondering if the colleges are talking to each other about what you're doing, rather than each one reinventing the wheel.

DR. GUNKEL: Yes, so at that level, presidents talk to presidents at the Presidents' Council; transfer counselors and admissions people talk to one another. It's what goes on kind of in between and around, you know? That's an area where, you know, creating fora and regular fora can help.

In this particular area, there are so many institutions that are going in that direction it would be hard to say who's influencing whom. You know, we've certainly been going in that direction; I know that Essex is also going in that direction; I know that Bloomfield is also going in that direction. It really works, especially-- And even breaking it apart, trying to do-- I was talking to the provost at the University of Illinois, Chicago -- which is a very similar institution to Rutgers University-Newark in so many respects, in terms of faculty, in terms of student demographics -- and they're also -- they're even extending some of this modular approach even into the summer, exactly to be able to pick up the students who, for whatever reason, weren't sure they were going to go to a four-year institution or even higher education at all; didn't take mathematics sophomore, junior, senior year or whatever -- had stopped out for a while. And they're actually -- they're paying it as part of a summer program cost, just to be able to get people back up to speed. So that's-- I'd say it's a national trend.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Okay, thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Any other questions? (no response)



I just want to make the same comment. I like your testimony; I feel like you're very supportive of some of the initiatives that we're looking at here.

You're right; we did look at the Maryland package for a lot of the student success and remediation -- legislation that we're looking at today. And I think that you're right -- it is a national trend, and I think that I feel encouraged that we, as a legislative body, are in tune to what's happening. I think that the State of New Jersey always has tried to do what is in the best interest of education, no matter what. You know, we are, as I say, we are always in the top three for our schools -- high school students' test scores. But that doesn't stop us from actually improving and always looking to improve, and that's what education is about. As educators we are-- That's why we're going through reforms for our lower schools, and teacher tenure reform, and all of those evaluation reforms. It is about constantly trying to improve the process.

And so thank you very much for coming.

DR. GUNKEL: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: And thank you for your testimony.

And then--

**J E A N M c D O N A L D R A S H:** Thank you; thanks again for having me as well this afternoon.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Yes.

MS. RASH: I am very interested to hear everything. A lot of this is new to me. I'm not from the academic side of the house; I'm an administrator. But access and completion are critically important to

someone in my profession, because I talk with students and their families every single day about how they're going to finance higher education. And it is becoming something that is a real struggle for a lot of families in New Jersey and throughout the nation. It's not a problem that is certainly limited to the State of New Jersey.

I think as I've heard this thing, I've heard a lot about a comprehensive plan. I am very supportive of that idea that New Jersey -- the State of New Jersey, for its citizens, really needs to look at all this legislation, instead of in a piecemeal way, as something that says, who do we have to educate? How can we educate them? How can we afford it? How can we help them afford it? And how can we get them through and into our job market as quickly as possible?

One of the things that I have in my testimony, which I feel very strongly about, is that in the K-12 arena we need to do more to educate students and their parents -- although we can't certainly mandate that -- about what does it cost to go to college; about when they need to start to think. I spend a lot of time with families that started planning for a college education when their student was a junior or senior in high school, and by then it's far too late for most institutions to help them the way they need to be helped, and they just -- they don't have the resources.

So that is where collaboration with community colleges -- and there are a lot of things that you can do to make that better. But really, educating students about what it costs to go to college, why it's a great investment, what it means to be a borrower, how to protect yourself as a borrower are all critical things for the State of New Jersey and our citizens.

And I would really urge that that be considered as legislation about higher education is considered.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Maybe on the high school guidance counselor area-- Mila, you're on the Education Committee.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Well, just a comment.

I think you're absolutely right, but, at the same time, we need to realize that as we ask our schools to do more, this is a time when we have fewer guidance counselors, we have fewer people to do that work. We have a financial literacy requirement in place. The question is, do we have people equipped to teach it, and is there enough time in the school day to do all these things that we keep pushing into the day?

So it has to be a comprehensive look. And I think the fact that we're beginning, finally, to talk about what happens pre-K through college or community college, and the fact that we're now finally going to focus more on the vocational-technical aspects, and what does the business community -- what are they looking for? Because one of the exciting things about the vo-tech package is the business community is working with us on it.

MS. RASH: That is great; that's all great for students.

I think at the Federal level, you know, we're really seeing a trend the other way toward a real clamp down on aid that will be available to students. There's a limit on Pell grants -- there never was. Now there's a limit on subsidized Stafford loans, which is the need-based loan program. And completion rate is a big issue nationally, and for students who don't complete, they are going to wind up in serious financial difficulty. And so

we have to do everything we can to make sure they understand what they're getting into.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Even when they complete -- and I'm dealing with this now with my own daughters; I have legislative aides who are paying back high student loans, okay? This is a very serious issue, and I don't know-- I mean, honestly, I just-- I don't know how we're going to address it because they are carrying debt that I have never even thought that I would be carrying. And that's for an education, to get a job that pays \$35,000 to \$40,000, if that. So it's heartbreaking.

MS. RASH: It is. And they really don't understand-- I honestly can say they don't understand when they're signing on the dotted line--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Exactly.

MS. RASH: --exactly what it is that they're getting themselves into. At that point, they just want to go to school, and I totally get that part of it; that's very understandable.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Right.

MS. RASH: But they should be educated borrowers, and I'm not sure they're quite there.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Well, that's clearly why I encourage the model of going two years to community college and stepping over -- depending on what your degree process is. This is a different mindset; this is testimony that we heard from Dr. Houshmand down in Rowan. The higher education community, in general, has to reevaluate their model and possibly have a paradigm shift of how we're delivering education to the students, and what's necessary. Look at what degree that

they're going for, and do they need that four-year degree or do they need just that two-year degree to go forward, or do they need two years first and then finishing at the four year? Do you know what I mean?

MS. RASH: Right, sure.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: So we have to-- We, as the adults, have to be able to say, "Yes, this is the best way; this is what's best for you. This is in your best financial interest, this is in your best educational interest." That's what-- I think that's our responsibility, and I thank you very much for your testimony today.

Any questions?

Joe, I apologize.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I have a couple.

How are you doing?

MS. RASH: Good, how are you?

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Good. I wanted to ask you about students with TR credits, but just a couple of other comments first.

Do you think students really understand the costs of an additional semester when they either drop a class, change a major? In the scope of higher education, do they truly understand what it means in terms of loans and portfolios? By the way, the average debt of a student in New Jersey when they graduate -- if they graduate -- is \$29,000.

MS. RASH: Around there, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Okay, right around there, knocking on the door? And some of them are north of \$40,000, is the way I understand it.

MS. RASH: Oh, sure, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Do students really understand what it is when they don't -- when they just chose to take an additional semester because there is not enough counseling or financial understanding? Do they really understand that, in your view?

MS. RASH: It depends on why the student is doing it. A lot of times that's because they didn't do something earlier in their academic career that's creating this need to go for another semester or a year. At that point, they're so close to the degree I don't even think they're thinking about the finances, quite frankly -- I don't.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: That's why the Pathways Bill here -- whether it's guidance in terms of what things cost and what it means when you change majors and when you -- and the additional supports.

MS. RASH: Right. When you go longer, six years is very different than four.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: We had a shopping sheet bill here, and I know there are multiple shopping sheets, and certainly a broad discussion about them in terms of their value. If I said to you that about 30 percent of the folks that -- I'll say families -- that look at an institution like Rutgers utilize a shopping sheet, would that be in the neighborhood?

MS. RASH: Thirty percent of families?

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Read it, and actually kind of utilize it. Or is that low or high?

MS. RASH: I think that's probably high.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: That's high.

MS. RASH: That's high.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Okay. I mean, I don't mind telling you, I'd write the bill if I wouldn't get laughed at so much -- but I'd love to see a student's first semester report card in every grade, 1st grade through 8th grade, have to include a signing of a college shopping sheet as to how much it costs to go in-state. Parents would get a real awakening along with an application to NJBEST.

MS. RASH: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: It would be something just kind of fundamental to get a true sense of costs.

MS. RASH: I mean, I mentioned educating students, but students aren't our biggest problem; parents of students are very unrealistic.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: That's like K-12-- (laughter)

MS. RASH: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Just have them-- When you get your first report card back, just sign a shopping sheet. At least somebody acknowledges in the house that they understood the costs, right? I mean, it certainly couldn't hurt.

Students with zero credits, or students that because of the expirations on Staffords and Pells, and the things that you're seeing -- are you seeing students, frankly, run out of time on grants?

MS. RASH: We will see students -- because the legislation is fairly new, so it started July 1, 2013.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Right.

MS. RASH: So the clock has started ticking now. And we have run into students at Rutgers who have already hit their Pell limit because they have spent a lot of time at a community college, took a long time to

get, maybe, an associate's degree before they moved on for their bachelor's program. They have no Pell; they have no Pell eligibility left. And, you know, for Stafford loans, that's going to become a real issue as well.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Now, I'm not saying it's the absolute solution, but having a cohesive, concise remedial plan -- where students aren't going into loans for zero credits -- has simply got to help; I mean, I think, just by common sense. And it's a great frustration now that there's even more limits on the opportunity for money -- which is no more than putting somebody in debt later, in some cases. But the worst case -- and we've seen it repeatedly, on this Committee and in our experiences, where students run out of time -- no degree. And, again, I go back to it -- the economic morass of this is something -- whether you have a student in college or whether they graduated -- is huge. It's just huge on a community level; the *Times* had a story Sunday about New York City losing its student population base -- if any of you saw it. And look at this city, which has potential thriving universities. We have to do more with that.

MS. RASH: The data clearly-- Even though students are borrowing more, and that's a big concern--

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Last point -- I knew there was one other point I wanted to make. The shopping sheets in particular -- financial information -- may be less than 30 percent. Is it a reasonable broad base -- not individual -- to say that folks who, frankly, are a high income level tend to utilize shopping sheets more, in your experience, than folks of a lower income level?

MS. RASH: In my experience, they are the only ones who use the net price calculator and shopping sheets, because they have the



sophistication to go to multiple websites, download the information, or input their information. Many students who really need financial aid, their parents just do not have the sophistication level to accomplish that. And so the various students that you would like to reach with those tools are the least likely to actually be reached with those tools.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Any better ideas for that -- how to expose -- other than my report card idea?

MS. RASH: Yes, that's why I'm-- Yes, I believe it has to happen early, and I think it has to be something that they hear over and over again as they're going through their K-12 experience. That it's not like elementary and secondary education in New Jersey -- it's not free, it's not -- you just don't go. And it's a great investment; I wouldn't want to turn students off to going to college, because that is the exact opposite of what we want to accomplish. But we certainly want them to go in and come out healthy financially.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Thanks, thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: And we want to stay competitive. We're still-- We're one of the most expensive, and other states are still quite attractive -- and becoming more attractive because their populations are decreasing, and they're recruiting from the State of New Jersey. So I think it's a vital issue for the State, as we move forward.

I thank you very much for your testimony.

Assemblyman Auth.

ASSEMBLYMAN AUTH: Chairman, excuse me.

Just two brief questions.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN AUTH: Through you, I'm sure you folks are aware of the housing bubble that was talked about a few years back and even today still. There is an upcoming -- or it's very close to coming -- a student loan bubble. Can you expound on that a little bit?

MS. RASH: Well, I know President Obama, just yesterday, released a new set of legislation to try to stop that from happening. There are good repayment options for students already in the Federal programs where they can do it as a percentage of their earnings, and as their earnings increase, the percentage goes up. They're given a long time to pay back those loans.

We want to avoid students from defaulting on Federal loans because that just ruins their young adult life. I mean, can't rent an apartment, can't buy a car, can't get started at all once you find yourself in that position.

What I don't think the Federal government -- the Department of Education is doing yet is making that information easily understood and widely available. And I do think this new legislation speaks a lot more to that. It also speaks to consolidating private student loans with Federal loans. Very important, because it's the private loan sector that gets a lot of students in trouble, because Federal loans have a reasonable limit that a student can borrow. But a private loan is between the bank and the student, and there's no limit. And that's where students really find themselves graduating, you know, with a -- even if it's a good starting salary, if you owe \$600 a month your starting salary is not going to get you very far.

ASSEMBLYMAN AUTH: The other question I wanted to ask, through you, Chairman, please.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN AUTH: Community colleges-- I spoke to someone who is in the upper echelons of Bergen Community College. And I asked him, I said, "What's the cost for a student to go here for a year?" And he said, "About \$5,000." So I thought that was pretty inexpensive compared to what it cost to go to one of your schools, or a private school where I went; it's dramatically lower. So I asked him, I said, "Well, how do you achieve that? Why is that so?" because it seems like there is such a disparity. And he said to me that they spend the money on the students.

So my question would be: Your rates are higher. Where are you spending the money?

MS. RASH: That would not be a question, very frankly, that I can answer. That would be for the Budget Office at Rutgers University. It's not my area of expertise.

DR. GUNKEL: I would say the same thing. I mean, you know, I oversee admissions, financial aid, and a lot of the academic advising -- the academic side of the house. So my interests are the lower we can get the tuition, the easier it is to get students in and the easier to manage the financial aid. So from our perspectives, you know, the overall costs and the tuition -- our interest is to see it as low as possible.

MS. RASH: Right.

DR. GUNKEL: So we don't control those decisions; that's a presidential or budget office decision.

ASSEMBLYMAN AUTH: Okay, thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Great. Well, thank you very much for your testimony.

MS. RASH: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: I might be calling on you with some of your testimony. I might reach out to you.

DR. GUNKEL: Absolutely. I'd be more than happy to (indiscernible) and continue the conversation. I know that Chancellor Cantor would also love to follow up with anyone. Her work with the Century Foundation Task Force, bridging the higher education divide, improving equity in community college outcomes, is--

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Century?

DR. GUNKEL: The Century Foundation Task Force.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I'll get it afterwards.

DR. GUNKEL: Yes, yes. It was a report that came out two years ago and it was on precisely what I said: improving equity in higher education outcomes, particularly looking at community colleges and the outcomes.

There are a lot of really good things, and one of the reasons why we're so excited that we were able to bring Chancellor Cantor to our institution -- which has really focused on trying to serve a very complex population of students with the faculty and resources that Rutgers has -- And to bring her experience in working on college affordability and completion issues. S I know that she is very interested to participate, and I'm sure Provost Clear and others as well.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Thank you very much.

DR. GUNKEL: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: All right. In light of the time, I have three other people who wanted -- organizations that wanted to testify. So I'm going to ask you to come up together. That would be Patrick Nowlan, Executive Director of Rutgers University AFT; Sue Tardi, Professor, William Paterson University, and Vice President of AFT New Jersey; and Mark Engasser, Kean University.

**PATRICK NOWLAN:** Good morning.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Good morning. Thank you very much for coming. (laughter) I know; we got here so early this morning.

MR. NOWLAN: Right, right.

Thank you for this opportunity. I represent -- our union represents over 7,000 faculty and-- So we at the AAUP-AFT at Rutgers represent over 7,000 faculty and academic professionals across all three campuses.

I mean, it's not really rocket science to figure what the problem here is, right? In the early 1990s the State deregulated higher education, right? There was no longer a Department of Higher Education, so there was no longer oversight. Colleges became universities and they expanded and grew. And if you look at the funding trend, right about when they deregulated higher education the State said, "We're cutting off the tab. We're not going to increase our funding for you." So increases in funding for public higher education is really just on the fringe benefit cost, right? So the level of funding has remained flat and student enrollment has skyrocketed. So especially in times of recession, you know, more people enroll.

So if you want to think about graduation rates, that's great. I think this is a great opportunity to have these broader discussions; I think the package of bills -- just the concept of having a package of bills that look at all these issues is incredible. I think that it's inspired our students as well.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: It has.

MR. NOWLAN: They have their own package, and I think it aligns very well with yours -- NJHELP, right? Higher Education Legislative Package.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: It's great.

MR. NOWLAN: Right. And, you know, if we're not funding higher education then what do we have? We really have private colleges and universities. The President of NJCU said it -- they are running it like a business; and Assemblyman Cryan said, your results aren't good. But if we don't have the courage to find the resources for the public good, if we don't have the courage to think about raising some taxes to fund higher education, what are we doing? We're just saying, "Tax the student." Tax an 18-year-old; increase their taxes by 5, 6, and -- when I was at Rutgers -- there were 10 percent increases in the 1990s, right? What are we doing here? Why are we-- And we talk about the student debt crisis and the big bubble that's coming. We created it, right? How do you expect students to graduate in four years -- as many of us did -- if they're working through college? And I don't mean working the summer to pay for their entire term bill; but working through college to actually eat. And you've heard some of the stories from students who have to make these difficult decisions.

I applaud you for this package of bills, but I think this has to be an ongoing dialogue. This should really be a roundtable, and the students need to be here, the alumni need to be here, the faculty, the staff need to be here. Because our members struggle every day with limited resources. And you may say, "What are they doing with all that money?" We don't know. The dollars come in, the tuitions get paid, the student aid gets paid, the State dollars -- as limited as they are -- come in. We don't know where they're going. But to talk about a public college or university as a business and students as clientele is really telling. And we usually talk about that, right? The unions talk about that, the faculty talks about this change -- right? -- in the terminology. She said it -- it's a business, they're clientele. We increase their taxes.

And if we're not talking about, on both sides, what we're doing to address these issues, then we're not going anywhere on this. Because the college presidents will pack up their bags at the end of the day, they'll have a paycheck, and the students will revolve in and out; some of them will graduate -- most of them will graduate at many of the schools. But we're not creating an educated workforce, a knowledgeable citizenry -- folks who are capable of giving back, of growing our economy. The student debt crisis -- we should all be appalled at that and shocked, and say, "This requires immediate attention," because our economy suffers from it. Mayors should be here saying people are not-- They're moving back with mom and dad. They're not moving into Jersey City; they're not renting, let alone buying; they're not buying cars -- because they're paying student debt. The banks are skimming off, so you have colleges and universities run as businesses. You have a student loan industry that's skimming-- I think 10 percent of

what we pay, nationwide, on higher education goes to banks in profits on student loans -- 10 percent; \$44 billion a year.

So we need oversight. One of the previous speakers talked about in Maryland -- how they had actual faculty involved in curriculum, statewide, to think about a lot of what you're talking about. How do you get common course numbering? How do you get reciprocity for courses? I mean, if you actually had faculty from a four-year institution, a research institution, a county college engaged in math at all those levels, talking about, "Well, what are you teaching, and what do you expect?" And go back into the high schools, for that matter. Go to the middle schools. What are we doing to make sure that we are progressing? Not that we said that we did something, we passed a bill, we made a change. Because if you rely on the college presidents to implement, you're going to wait a long time.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: That's why we're here.

MR. NOWLAN: You are. I mean, there used to be something called a Commission on Higher Education, right? And for all its flaws, it actually had voting students on it, and voting faculty, and voting alumni on it. And that was done away with. So there is no oversight of public higher education in New Jersey. And it's a great treasure in New Jersey. There are a lot of great things happening on our campuses. But if the dollars are not accountable, if they're not going into the classroom or the research laboratories at Rutgers, then they're probably not wisely spent. And we need to create institutions.

I'll just say a couple of other things.



Financial literacy -- why don't we make that a required high school course?

ASSEMBLYMAN MUKHERJI: It is.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: It is.

MR. NOWLAN: It is?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Yes.

MR. NOWLAN: Why don't we give them college credit for that so they can determine where they're going to college, what it costs--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: That's not a bad idea.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: It's a good idea.

MR. NOWLAN: Put some economic foundations into that course. I don't know the course, but if that's required, let them all walk into college with 3 credits.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: That was required-- I think we voted on that and it was passed into law about two sessions ago. And I think the implementation is this year. So that's why you probably didn't know much--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Maybe we could add that to it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: But that's a great idea.

MR. NOWLAN: And then a first-year student and a graduating student from college should have to attend workshops to refresh on that, right? What choices are they making? And 18-year-old making decisions about student debt and having to weigh, "is it really an investment anymore? Is it going to be worth it at the tail end after four or six years, or if I don't graduate?" -- these are big decisions to make, and I

think that we should be doing more to equip them to make those decisions for themselves.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Okay, are you going to let Susan talk? (laughter)

MR. NOWLAN: I'm going to stop. (laughter)

**S U S A N N A T A R D I, Ph.D.:** I don't know where to begin, other than to, first of all, say good afternoon, and thank you very much for providing this opportunity for us to express our viewpoints on what we believe needs to occur on higher education.

I'd like to begin by just providing an overview of what we do support. First of all, I represent AFTNJ in higher education. I'm also the President of the union -- the Local 1796 at William Paterson, and I'm a faculty member in the Department of Sociology. And the latter is the one that I'm most proud of.

I can tell you that I am so pleased that you have put forth a package of bills that has brought about attention to everyone -- an urgency that something needs to be done. And that if you, the faculty, staff, administration, don't help us do something, then we're going to impose something that may not be so great.

Assemblyman Cryan -- I really appreciate -- he came to our May 16 conference at William Paterson. And I have to tell you -- you were very open, forthright, honest in your presentation. Some of us didn't like to hear exactly what we were hearing--

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I noticed. (laughter)

DR. TARDI: --but they appreciated it. And you helped me, as a union leader, more than anyone else could have; because they heard it

right from the legislator -- exactly what your concerns were and what the ramifications could be.

I believe that a tuition freeze would be an excellent idea. My only concern, and the concern of our representatives, would be we want to make sure that if you freeze it for one cohort of students, then what happens when the next cohort comes in? Are they going to bear a bigger increase, so that they bear a burden? Or will the bill be written in such a way that it will be fair and the tuition will be kept at its minimum?

I'm sure the presidents are not that thrilled with any kind of tuition increase, because-- I have to say that at the end of my presentation - - I gave you written testimony, by the way -- you will see that I made some recommendations; and one of them is for you to examine the amount of money that is spent on the delivery of instruction in the classroom, versus the administrative expenditures at each college and university.

And you asked the question, Assemblyman Cryan, where is the money going? Take a look at the administrative gloat (*sic*) and that's where the money is going -- because the salaries of the faculty have basically been flat. There have been articles in 2014 written in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *USA Today* confirming the statement that I'm making.

And so I think we really have to talk about the elephant in the room. What has happened to higher education? Higher education has been devalued. A college degree is no longer what a college degree was when many of you and I went to college. It's the equivalent -- and it's viewed by companies -- as the equivalent of a high school diploma. And we need to do something to modify that, to make sure that a college degree has value.

My fear is that, in terms of focusing on things like a graduation rate-- I agree, we all agree, the graduation rates are appalling, especially the four-year graduation rates. But Assemblyman Cryan, I wish that you and Senator Cunningham would have been able to stay for the remainder of the conference, because I had students who were there, and they spoke about the reasons why they cannot graduate in four years. We heard story after story about the students -- some of them come from working-class backgrounds in which they must work. And at William Paterson, our studies indicate that our students work more than the other students at other State colleges and universities just to be able to afford the tuition; and, in many cases, they're helping out their parents.

And it's not only a lower-class phenomenon; it's become a middle-class phenomenon as well. Many of their parents -- middle-class parents -- have lost their jobs. With the economy the way it is, the students are sometimes not able to get the assistance that they were able to get in the past.

I'm getting cotton mouth; forgive me.

So I think that we really have to make sure that we're providing quality education and meeting the needs of our students. We had, at that conference, members from the business community come and talk about, what do you want from students? They don't really care if it takes them a little bit longer to graduate; that's not relevant to them. I understand why it's relevant to you and to me -- because of the outrageous debt that these poor students are involved with. But what they're looking for are specific knowledge and skills relevant to being able to function as good members in a corporation, in a society.

Writing skills -- our students are severely deficient in their writing skills. Simple mathematical skills -- they have to pull out a calculator. And part of that is because-- I mean, technology is a wonderful things; but when you don't know how to add two plus two, that you have to pull out the calculator because that's what you're accustomed to doing, you cannot do simple mathematics -- there is a problem.

Where I will caution you and urge you to take a more significant look is in terms of using the graduation rate as a metrics for funding. I think that the graduation rate needs to improve; I think that you should hold each institution, based upon its mission, accountable for defining how it's going to improve; but institutions have different needs. When you try to apply a one-size-fits-all model it will not work; it will not be successful.

And so in terms of the remediation, I can tell you it's very disheartening for me as a professor in a classroom when I realize that my students are not college ready. But that doesn't mean they can't be successful. And you asked a very good question, which the Presidents could not answer -- but I can answer it for you, Assemblyman Cryan. You asked what do we do -- you know, what do you do, how do you improve, how do we create remediation programs that work? They've had remediation programs that worked; at William Paterson, they canceled them. We had a sponsored students program, we had an Alchemy Program, with a good proportion of students who were minority students involved in those programs. That cohort of students consistently had the highest graduation rates. They were canceled. And what did the President say? The President said, "Well, we're going to do that for all students." Well, in a time where

you're not getting additional funding, and you're underfunded as is, and you're not shifting resources, how are you going to deal with providing that kind of mentoring that's necessary to help students achieve who have remedial needs?

Advisement is crucial. We have an advisement model now -- the faculty was against it -- but it was imposed on us. There's a lack of shared governance. When you say, "What are the presidents going to do?" I know that you're assuming that the presidents are speaking with the faculty; that there's an environment of shared governance. Don't assume that -- don't assume that. I think that's why I would urge you to encourage -- And I know you do through these hearings, but I would encourage that if it's possible -- and I know how busy you are -- to rotate these hearings at various institutions, where faculty and staff could come out so that they would be able to tell you what the problems and the impediments are. Faculty have solutions; we're just not listened to. And faculty are willing to put in more time and effort when they feel that they are a part of the process -- that they are a part of the decision making. And then they're willing to be accountable. But when you're left out of the discussion, then there's a different type of atmosphere that's going to prevail.

So remediation rates-- We know we have students who are underprepared. To blame K-12 at this point serves no purpose. There have been reforms that have been made regarding K-12; we don't know whether those reforms are going to be effective or not, and I'm glad that things are now being reexamined -- taking a step back to look at these reforms.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Okay, Susan. Could you wrap it up?

DR. TARDI: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Because I would like to-- I apologize.

DR. TARDI: No, no, it's okay. You have my written testimony.

I just urge you to please provide opportunities for faculty to work with the administration and you, to really let you know what is going on in higher education. And I know you want to provide a quick fix because some of these issues are urgent -- like what's happening to the students -- but a quick fix won't be a good one.

I think it's better to step back and change what you know will work immediately, but take a deep breath and work through the commission that you're trying to form to deal with the other issues.

Thank you for your time.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Thank you.

Mr. -- is it Engasser (indicating pronunciation)? I apologize.

**MARK ENGASSER:** Call me Mark; it's okay.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Mark -- thank you.

MR. ENGASSER: You don't have to be that formal with me. But the last name is Engasser.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: And you're from Kean University?

MR. ENGASSER: Yes I am. Sorry; don't hold that against me.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Don't be sorry. Lots of good folks there; lousy President.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: And you are a faculty member at Kean?

MR. ENGASSER: Yes, I am. Yes, I am a proud resident of Jersey City, so I'm thankful there is a venue here; that you came here to meet here. I take mass transit, so it's a little difficult to get to other venues where you had things. So thank you very much for being here.

This was my first place of employment as an educator; I taught early childhood education here. I'm a three-time graduate from, used to be, Jersey City State College. So I work currently with teacher certifications. So I'm seeing battles on all fronts: higher ed, with what's going on with our teachers out there at the P-12 level.

And I'm thrilled that I had the opportunity to come here today to represent some good people -- not only through Kean, but through other universities that have concerns -- people who work in the trenches and work with the students. Sort of an informal, say, think tank, or strong advocates for the students and the parents who have concerns.

Most of the people I've spoken to are thrilled that you're doing this -- it's long overdo; absolutely, we agree with you with some of these points. I took offense to Dr. Henderson with regards to the business model. They're students, we're providing an education. And if they want to look at a student as a customer, and after four, five, six years they're not happy with their degree because they can't get a job, is that degree now a receipt and they can get their money back? (laughter)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: We've had that same statement--



MR. ENGASSER: Because that's what we hear, and students get offended when they're referred as that.

The three points that I was asked to, by my Director of Teacher Certification-- Because we want quality out there. We believe in *transparency* and *honesty* -- two rare words that come through some administrators' doors. And we tell students, "It's cheaper to go to a community college. Go back, get some credits, come see us." We deal with the population of undergraduates who are being certified; I deal with a population of people who are returning from the workforce who have lost their jobs or changing their careers -- such as I did -- to become educators. People who want to be more marketable, to change because they really want to make a difference.

And when we were looking at some of the things, again, we were happy to see what you want to do. The one thing about the 120 credits -- I agree. Sadly, it took me five years. I had to help support my mom after my father passed away. I was under the Ronald Reagan slashes my last year of college. I had to work, I had to scramble -- but I made it through. We don't take into account people who turn right around and then go to graduate school, because they're being told, "Well, you need something more than an undergraduate degree."

One hundred and twenty credits is doable now because schools have summer sessions -- one, two, three sessions. Kean University started several years ago having winter session. There are online courses, if you have to work a couple of jobs, where you can log on at 1:00 in the morning and you can do your coursework. There was one institute that tried to institute something, I believe, several years -- business courses -- called

*sunrise and sunset sessions* where those who were working in the financial industry had an online class from 6 a.m. to 7:30 a.m., and then from 10:30 to midnight. They can log on and they can do their coursework. I mean, there's creative ways to go about it.

I just don't know if certain majors -- if 120 credits can really do it. And it is hard when you transfer in and you lose some credit. I'd like to see that work a little more.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Along that line, that's what we've-- We've discussed that. You're right, there are some majors that might not be able to fit into that model. But in general--

MR. ENGASSER: Such as math and science.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Exactly. In general, it's a reasonable expectation -- it's absolutely a reasonable and achievable expectation. So thank you.

MR. ENGASSER: We applaud you for the idea about this nine semester tuition freeze. Costs have been exorbitant. I mean, we get people who aren't the 18-year-olds who are coming in. But you have a high school about eight miles up the road on Kennedy Boulevard that has a daycare center for the students who go to high school with children. You heard that part, right? For the students who have children who are in high school. They're coming in already single moms and dads. So they already have that on their back.

So how do you help them do this? Freezing the tuition is great, but we would like to see -- and when I say we, as a collective: other colleges and universities, people who we talk to. The fees: Any administrator will tell you, "Well, yes, we only raised tuition 2 percent last year; we're number

one at this and blah, blah, blah.” Yes, that’s fine. But when the fees go up and some students don’t even know what these fees are-- As I said to you, Assemblywoman Riley, it’s when you buy a car, you see one price, and then all of a sudden all these other little things are tagged on -- and then it’s an exorbitant amount of money.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: I want you to know there is a bill in the package that would require the State Auditor to conduct audits -- an audit of fees charged by public institutions. So, I mean, we are very much aware about the fee-- (laughter)

MR. ENGASSER: Yes, that’s (indiscernible) cost. I mean, there are many, many layers of colleges and universities that are hiring-- One particular university -- I won’t mention who that is -- that is consistently hiring six-figure salary administrators. Regular faculty are leaving, support staff are losing their jobs, but yet this is being done. Buildings are being built, and there are no students going there.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: All good points.

MR. ENGASSER: And you know, it’s really scary because we want to produce great young educators, great young businesspeople. Trying to keep them to stay in New Jersey -- very difficult.

And there was one other point about wanting to close down the schools. That was something that really concerns us -- when we had seen that part, because everybody just focuses on, “We’re going to lose our jobs.” There’s a part of education right now that teachers are coming under an extreme hot microscope. And colleges of education now are under threat of being closed down or losing their accreditation if certain criteria aren’t being met. We agree, we want quality people out there -- not all of them are,

okay? But you can't weed everybody out. And we tend to worry about this.

And the one thing with regards to cost, and finishing school, and worrying about graduation rates: Assemblyman, you brought up a good point about the bubble with regards to debt. The bigger bubble that we're starting to see now, almost two years later, was the bubble called Superstorm Sandy. Students who left because they couldn't afford to come back to school, because they lost their home, their car, their books, their lives. I've had a least at dozen people just in the last two months who we thought finished and now they're finally coming back. And we look at where they live and we ask, "How were you affected?" "We lost everything." That has to be -- the variables that are not in that equation, but that I think have to be looked at.

And yes, I agree: trustees, presidents, and vice presidents -- all need to be put into a panel and answer questions to alumni, to faculty, to staff, and to the communities, to the mayors, to the employers, okay?

So we applaud what you are trying to do; but these were just some of the concerns that some of the people we speak to-- Because we actually advocate for the students. And what my colleagues here all today spoke so eloquently about, it's true with all these points -- especially with finances. It's difficult.

So I thank for your time in listening.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: I thank you.

All good points, and I appreciate that you took some time out of your day. And I'm glad that we came up here to Jersey City.

MR. ENGASSER: Me too.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: And if you came down to Rowan, there's no train, no bus, so--

MR. ENGASSER: No. It takes three trains for me to get to Kean from Hoboken.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: That's it exactly.

Any questions of any of these--

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Sorry, I (indiscernible).

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: That's all right, Assemblyman Cryan.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Just a couple of things. That train you take to Kean was paid for by the town of Union and New Jersey Transit, okay? (laughter) Just know that, because the University didn't pay.

MR. ENGASSER: I'm on your side as far as Kean, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: No, no, believe me, I know. I just--

(Indiscernible) mentioned the art of the bill and fees. And using Kean -- Kean has got a 19 percent increase over the last five years in fee increases. One of the bills that I hope gets through here is the one that requires a State Auditor to audit fees for the appropriate usage and what they're being used for. And one of the things that we've seen consistently, as we looked at the fee process, is that it's a head scratcher in terms of--

I also want to thank everybody for their comments, and make a couple of quick points.

Overall debt is also another part of this discussion as we do roundtables. The nine publics in New Jersey have an overall debt that's

approaching \$5 million (*sic*). The worst school, and I know there is a representative in the audience, is the one you work at. They're debt rating is A2; its credit outlook is negative, with a bond rating of negative, and their debt is north of \$330 million, with an operating budget of \$176 -- and I think it's 13 to 16 percent of their operating budget. So it's pretty bad, and yet they want to go buy more property, which is understandably-- By the way, with the freshman--

MR. ENGASSER: Well, you've seen the buildings there.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: For the freshman enrollment that I understand it to be, of 650 next year of incoming freshmen -- so of the school population that's 11,000 or more. So I think there are some real issues.

But that said-- But that goes to Pat's earlier point. There is no accountability here. And in some cases it works. I'm not going to kid you, for me it's been about graduation rates and affordability, and the understanding that a family knows what they're going to get when they finish. The reality is, is that if you go to Rutgers-New Brunswick -- and President Barchi has numbers to support it -- your opportunity to graduate is north of 70 in six years. I don't accept six years. The first comment I made to the Secretary of Higher Ed, in the Budget Committee, as she said, "We have these four-year institutions," I said, "Which ones?" (laughter) Because I think there are two -- TCNJ and Princeton in New Jersey. The rest still need to argue that point. Your institution has a 20 percent graduation rate in four years -- 1 out of 5 for full-time freshman equivalent students, just to put it in perspective.

I do want-- I want that because-- I think part of the bubble, besides Sandy and student debt, is these guys are borrowing themselves into oblivion. Who's paying? When you have an A2 negative outlook -- with a negative outlook and a reduced student population, and you're arrogant enough to try to go steal other people's taxpaying land, you really have to wonder as to who's running the shop. (laughter)

MR. ENGASSER: So if you just think about Rutgers--

MR. NOWLAN: We scratch our heads all the time there.

MR. ENGASSER: If you think about Rutgers going into the Big 10, what's the cost of that in terms of upgraded facilities--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Which brings me to the point that I wanted to bring up. I read it, and I was trying to flip through it.

I read a story over the weekend where administrative costs are up 381 percent. So one of the things about the State Auditor, is going in and looking at the viability of that. Everybody goes to work and thinks they're working hard. It's the truth. And we've gone through this in K-12, and Mila will tell you there's a lot of administrative costs that we've helped create or certainly have facilitated. And that's got to be looked at in the scope of that.

So a consolidated plan with the presidents would be a really good thing to be a part of.

The fundamental point I wanted to get to, though, was Pat's opening point -- this idea of growth since we've decentralize. I mean, we looked at student aid -- we looked at tuition aid numbers; in 2006 it was \$955 million, in 1998 it was \$700-and-something million. It actually went

up \$225 million. Tuition increases in 2006 were almost 8 percent, on average. More aid doesn't equate to less tuition increases.

MR. NOWLAN: It's a broken model -- the high tuition, high aid model.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: It's a broken model, and now it's almost a Ponzi, is what it is.

MR. NOWLAN: Because the aid never keeps pace.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: In some cases, not all-- And that's probably a bad comment. But certainly in a lower-- In, I'll say, middle class schools, institutions -- or with a lower demographic -- you can argue that it certainly is. So the idea-- And who asked folks to go build-- Who asked for three new buildings -- three empty buildings? And who controlled it? Nobody. One of the bills we just wrote asked that at least instead of having these boards of trustees just be able to bond and the world's supposed to say, "Thank you," is to at least have the Secretary of Higher Education and the Treasurer of the State of New Jersey sign off for appropriateness. Because something has to be done, because that's a long-term financial issue for us as well.

But the point I wanted to go back to was on the William Paterson stuff. I agree -- teachers do -- and professors -- do a great job. And by the way, I did get a chance to talk to those students while we were waiting for the program to start. I only had an hour, so-- And they gave me a pretty good blasting too; they weren't much appreciative of that closure bill.

But it has brought up the point: What's so wrong about asking that half the students graduate? That's what I fundamentally come back to,



people. I saw a story today in the *Jersey Journal* and an editorial in the *Star-Ledger*. Tell me, is it so wrong to ask that half the students graduate in six years? And by the way, what about the tens of thousands who have gone before who are out of there and didn't graduate, who still have the debt, who are still part of our thing? Is it so wrong to ask for a little accountability?

And my last point -- and I'm sorry, I just-- And not being challenging, because I sound difficult -- I get a lot of knock-off the edginess. But anyway, my thing is this: Once a student comes into an institution, the institution's accountable. The higher ed school is accountable. Once you say yes, you say yes with baggage, warts, and all that goes with it. If they're not ready -- you're problem. You accepted them. You're growing. I watched schools that used to be 10,000 that have 21,000, 22,000 students now. And I say to myself, "Why?" Is it really the Legislature's fault that we don't have enough money? Who's watching the store?

But once a student goes in -- that's what's so frustrating about the remedial process, and that's what's so frustrating about the graduation rate count. You took them; they're yours. And I get it. Faculty -- I'm a faculty guy, believe me. Pat and I have had this discussion; I'm onboard. I do think administration costs -- 381 percent, is what the story quoted, in the last 10 years -- have gone up in college campuses; 381 percent in administrative costs. That's staggering. So we should look at it.

But I just want to make the point -- and it's a final point. This growth factor -- ultimately, I don't recall any legislative bill, any law into place, any request from anybody, any Governor who said, "Please take your

school and go from a 10,000-student teaching school to a 22,000 be-everything-to-everybody school.”

DR. TARDI: Assemblyman Cryan, if I--

MR. NOWLAN: That’s the unwritten deal, right?

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I don’t have one of those. But my problem is this -- and I rattled off on the STEM stuff with the Secretary of Higher Ed. There’s a big empty STEM building on Morris Avenue. You can shoot a bomb through it. It’s a very pretty building, but it’s empty, okay? And those things -- nobody’s controlling the store, and there should be: you can do this, and you can that, but we all don’t have to do everything.

These bills begin that conversation, but they don’t end it. I’d like to think the freeze is ultimately a stop-gap measure until we get the ship back on board. But I do think it’s important for students who are sitting here now, who are dealing with the affordability, to do something to show we care. And I do think fundamentally at the end of the day -- just so it’s clear -- we should have a strong Commissioner. Because, frankly, somebody has to say-- And there are really good schools. I met with the President of a Mercer County school who has a terrific graduation rate, who talks about the accountability to her Board of Trustees when she has to present; and then I watch a Board try to take land that isn’t theirs when they’re in debt out their eyeballs. And it makes me fascinated.

So I watch things go, and I say to myself, “You really need a final say,” and there should be some accountability -- and it should be with the Commissioner. And I agree with that completely.

DR. TARDI: Assemblyman Cryan, I would just like to make one statement and caution the Committee on one factor regarding the graduation rates.

Some of the universities, like William Paterson, in terms of the six-year graduation rate -- it would be achievable by the deadline that you stated. But my concern would be how will it be achieved. You know what happened in K-12; teachers began feeling pressured to teach to the test. And it's easy to raise a graduation rate. It's easy for faculty to say, "You know, we're being--" And you're a straight shooter, you tell me that, and so I'm giving you the straight shooting back so that you get a clear picture. My concern is that we don't want quality education to disappear because then we have to worry about, "Well, you know, the university is going to close; we're not going to let that happen." So then what are faculty going to do? Are they going to be pressured by the administrators? We were issued what was called a *DFW report*. And it highlighted every class and the percentage of students who had Ds, Fs, or Ws. And then they said, "Well, no, we only did that -- we're not telling you you have to pass more students." But at a time when these bills were coming out, to issue that report and not put it in an appropriate context initially put pressure on faculty.

And I have been called, as the union leader, and faculty have been saying, "You know, I have a lot of students who really have failed this class; they shouldn't go on to the next class. What should I do?" My comment was, "Fail them. If you don't fail them-- They get what they deserve, what they've earned."

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: So this is what I say, also then. My comment back to you is, give them back their money, all right? That's how I feel about it, as a parent. If they fail a class, they're not getting the credit, they walk away. It's just as much the teacher's responsibility -- and I am in the K-12 environment and I have been going through this whole process of being evaluated. So I don't have a problem saying, "This is going to happen" at the higher education level. There is going to be accountability. And we will demand it on the legislative level if that hasn't happened.

DR. TARDI: We want accountability. But we want accountability that will not produce a negative effect in terms of quality education. That's all.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: We agree, we agree.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: And trust your -- everybody's professionalism that (indiscernible).

I knew there was one other point I was trying to write down.

The bill for the tuition freeze and fee freeze also requires each school to give a projected tuition increase the following year. It puts the onus on the Assembly, it puts the onus on the Legislature to at least understand what it is. And we costed it the first year -- I just wanted everybody to know that. Our math -- not OLS, who is our guru, all right? -- we still use calculators and pens and paper -- we estimated for the higher ed publics to be \$8 million. It looked like a really good idea until the tax money came in and we have an \$800 million debt.

And by the way, one other thing on retention would have been to write off -- the bill for the write-off of student debt loans here. That was

costed by OLS between \$18 million and \$20 million. That went south with the budget deficit. But there were some ideas there.

MR. NOWLAN: So one other comment and recommendation is, there is a Federal program that if you work in the public service -- so, at a university, for example, or public school; you're a teacher -- you don't have to be providing the public service, you can be the accountant for the school district -- but you're in the public service. After 10 years of paying off your student loans, if you're in this program you get debt forgiveness after that.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Yes, you're right.

MR. NOWLAN: We should require every college and university -- the public ones, at least -- to participate--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: To participate.

MR. NOWLAN: --in that to help their employees, and maybe their students, to enroll in these programs.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Thank you.

DR. TARDI: It would also be helpful if students could have some assistance in order to have early degree completion or timely degree completion. They don't get any financial aid during winter sessions and summer session. So if there were a way for students to be able to do that -- I know it's limited funds and the State has budget issues -- but that would be helpful as well.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: All very good suggestions.

Any other--

Assemblyman Auth.

ASSEMBLYMAN AUTH: Is that okay?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Yes, absolutely, absolutely.

ASSEMBLYMAN AUTH: Pat -- is that your name?

MR. NOWLAN: Patrick, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN AUTH: Patrick, excuse me.

MR. NOWLAN: Pat -- we go way back.

ASSEMBLYMAN AUTH: I don't know you that long. These guys have known you a little longer. (laughter)

Okay. You mentioned in the outset of your comment -- the notion of raising taxes. So my question is, how much additional tax do you think we need to raise, and from whom?

MR. NOWLAN: I think we should study that. I think we should think about what resources are currently available. There actually is a big debate nationally now about free college education. And a lot of that is funded through reworking current aid programs. So instead of getting student aid for a high tuition, the institutions get those dollars directly and they're potentially -- like you could have accountability about how they're increasing their cost. But free college education-- Two-year models, I think, are the ones that are out there; the first two years are free.

So I think we should find really smart people -- economics professors, folks in the business schools -- to crunch these numbers for us and say, "What is it going to take?" I'm not sitting here saying, "You need to just find \$100 million," right? We'd love to have that, right? But maybe that's not the number that we need.

We should figure that out, though. OLS could probably figure out a number; we have faculty that I'm sure would contribute to that, folks in our administration. I think if we thought about what it takes, I think it's

better to tax broadly and defray the cost than to jack up the tuition on young people, and their families, and their grandparents.

DR. TARDI: That's coming from Patrick. It's not coming from the 30,000 people that I necessarily represent. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Some of those are very good suggestions and we're going to investigate them, all right?

Are you satisfied? Is everybody else satisfied? (no response)

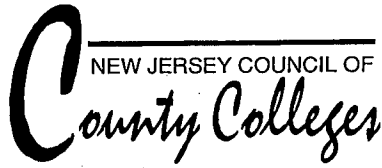
I thank you very much for coming out today and attending. We got some great input; it was a very interesting hearing and I look forward to working with all of you as we move forward in the future in this Committee.

So thank you very much. Have a great day.

**(HEARING CONCLUDED)**

## APPENDIX





MR. BAKARI G. LEE, ESQ. – Chairman  
DR. LAWRENCE A. NESPOLI – President

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE  
ASSEMBLY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DR. LAWRENCE NESPOLI  
NEW JERSEY COUNCIL OF COUNTY COLLEGES

JUNE 11, 2014

Assemblywoman Riley, Assemblyman Cryan, and members of the Assembly Higher Education Committee, you just heard from President Glen Gabert, welcoming you to Hudson County Community College. What a great and vibrant community college Hudson County Community College has become under his strong leadership over the past 20+ years. On behalf of President Gabert's colleagues and friends throughout the state, I want to thank him for his leadership not only here at Hudson, but also as a member of our statewide community college team. He is one of our most senior community college presidents, and brings much wisdom to our state-level table. Thank you Glen!

Community college leaders have testified at the prior two hearings – President Pat Donohue of Mercer County Community College at the first and President Ray Yannuzzi of Camden County College at the second. I want to quickly recap their testimony and add to it a bit here today in the third and last of your hearings.

President Donohue spoke at length about A2804 (graduation rates). While the conversation about graduation rates is clearly more complicated for open-door institutions like community colleges (which are required by law to accept all high school graduates plus all other persons 18 years of age and older), we support the call for a plan to improve graduation rates at community colleges as provided in A2804..

President Donohue also spoke about A676 (performance funding). We recognize that other states have moved, at least in part, to performance-based funding for higher education. So as recently as last week, President Donohue convened a working group of community college presidents and others to review the models from these other states and present some preliminary recommendations on what metrics might be included in a New Jersey performance-based funding approach for community colleges.

President Yannuzzi spoke about several of the other bills in your package: A2802 (Reverse Transfer), A2805 (Common Course Numbering), and A2810 (Cap on the Number of Credits in Degrees).

He also emphasized that three bills – A2800 (college readiness), A2817 (dual enrollment), and A2818 (education plans and “pathways”) – especially have great potential for helping community college students. I’d like to say just a brief word more about those three bills.

There is an emerging national conversation occurring among community college leaders about how to help more students succeed – to graduate. A lot of research has been done. The single most important thing I want to share this afternoon is that if you look at all of that national

research, it “shouts out” for the three ideas that you are proposing in A2800, A2817, and A2818. That’s not to say that the other bills you have proposed are not important – they are. But we believe these three bills – again, A2800, A2817, and A2818 – have the greatest potential to help more community college students succeed.

A2800 (College Readiness Now) – This bill brings community college faculty together with high school teachers to (a) identify 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders who need extra help; (b) diagnose what English and Math weaknesses these students have; and (c) develop and deliver transition courses to these students so that more of them will be college ready by the time they graduate from high school. Community colleges, by their very mission, will never stop trying to help the students who enroll at our colleges. But there is increasing evidence that helping students *while they are still in high school* is in many ways the better (and more cost-effective) approach. With that in mind, we believe this bill will help build momentum so that we are able to deliver these kinds of college readiness programs in more school districts throughout the state. It will require funding of course. We estimate the costs to be about \$250 per student.

A2817 (Dual Enrollment) – This bill requires public colleges to offer dual enrollment programs to high school students and to waive their tuition in varying amounts depending on student need. It turns out that completing even a single college course while in high school can make a huge difference in increasing a student’s chance of graduating from college. However, dual enrollment works financially only if the cost is a shared responsibility – among the colleges, the school districts, and the families (who can afford to pay). Colleges should have skin in the game by waiving part of their tuition for dual enrollment students. In fact, they could initially waive all of their tuition, provided that they are later reimbursed by the school districts. That’s the way

it works in Maryland, for example. The colleges waive all of the tuition for all students. But the school districts later reimburse the colleges for 75 percent of the waived tuition, and then the school districts recover some of that expense by charging fees to the families of students who are not eligible for free or reduced price lunch. So, it's a shared responsibility – as it should be.

A2818 (Degree Plans) – Finally, numerous recent national studies recommend educational plans and structured pathways as a key way to improve student success. So, there is no question that this bill is grounded in sound educational policy and is entirely consistent with the most recent conversations that community college leaders are having throughout the country.

Taken together then, we think these three bills – A2800, A2817, and A2818 – present a powerful opportunity to improve student success (and graduation rates) in ways not previously done in New Jersey. We look forward to further conversations with you about these three bills in the legislative process ahead.

Again, we thank you for your strong leadership in bringing state policy attention to all of these important higher education issues. We would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

## **Assembly Higher Education Committee Hearing**

Culinary Conference Center, Scott Ring Room, 2nd floor, 161 Newkirk Street, Jersey City

### **John Gunkel, Vice Chancellor, Academic Programs and Services, Rutgers University - Newark**

I want to thank Chair Riley and the other representatives on the Assembly Higher Education Committee for this opportunity to testify about the package of higher education bills that were introduced this spring and, perhaps more importantly, for providing such an important venue for the discussion about higher education in New Jersey that the introduction of these bills represented.

It is hard to imagine a topic that is more significant for the future of this state than of the direction of its institutions of higher education, since this is in the end a conversation about the future of its citizens, especially of many of its younger citizens, who make up both our prospective electorate and our prospective workforce. And, despite the doubts that repeatedly are raised about the value of higher education in the media, data show again and again that a baccalaureate degree is a superb investment in future earnings and consequently remains a powerful engine for social mobility. Speaking about data presented in a recent Economic Policy Institute paper, David Leonhardt recently concluded, "Yes, college is worth it, and it's not even close." At the same time, we know that we in New Jersey, just like every other state, must do more to maintain college affordability and hold down rising student debt and thus to reduce substantial barriers to earning a bachelor's degree for those who can most benefit from the opportunities such a degree represents – the least well off whose access to credit markets can be most limited and who are less likely to have a resilient social and financial safety net to help them rebound from student loan default.

For the State of New Jersey, addressing these challenges ideally would occur in the context of a systematic approach to higher education that establishes positions on college readiness, remedial preparation, curricular pathways within institutions as well as curricular articulation between institutions, degree requirements, data collection and reporting, institutional cost and debt management, and of course funding mechanisms to support this all in a strong and sustainable way. I hope that the discussion that has been initiated by the introduction of this package of legislation catalyzes the development of such an approach, and I know that I and many of my colleagues at Rutgers University – Newark would eagerly participate in, and add the expertise we have to, any effort to pursue this for the State of New Jersey. I think that several of the bills in the package are particularly conducive to adopting a systematic perspective, and it is on these that I particularly want to comment for the remaining few minutes of my remarks today.

From their inception, two-year schools leading to an associate degree have been a way for students of modest means to overcome barriers to entry on the path to the baccalaureate degree – a way that, over time, has become increasingly significant for students and institutions alike. More than half of the entering classes for Rutgers University – Newark during calendar year 2014, for example, will enter as transfer students from some other institution of higher education, and around three-quarters of these – over a thousand students (1010) – will enroll from New Jersey's community colleges. And while our transfer students in general consistently graduate at rates comparable to or even higher than those who

enter Rutgers University –Newark as first-time first-year students, we know well that the ability to facilitate baccalaureate completion for transfer students depends heavily on how smooth and strong the pathway is from community colleges to four-year colleges and universities, and that it why it is so good to see so many of the bills in the package focus the “growth of redesigned institutions that facilitate the connection between community colleges and four-year colleges.” For, as the report of the Century Foundation task force on this topic states, “By strengthening connections between two- and four-year institutions, fewer students would be lost in what can often be a difficult process of moving to four-year settings, in which credits fail to transfer with students and different financial aid policies may exist.”

The proposed investment in “redesigned institutions” would create a Statewide reverse transfer agreement that complements the existing transfer agreement, provide mechanisms to encourage students who have stopped out of higher education to reenroll, coordinate course numbering systems across the state, and lead to develop concrete degree completion plans for individual students. In order for the initiatives proposed in these bills to effectively bridge the divide, however, it is essential for New Jersey institutions of higher education to move from bilateral relations between institutions to genuine collaboration, to move from “full faith and credit” and common course numbers to coordinated learning outcomes, to move from transfer guides and recommended transfer programs to statewide faculty panels and articulation committees. This kind of deep reform will require standing forums for faculty and administrators at multiples levels (not just president to president or admissions officer to transfer counselor) to overcome the hurdles transfer students face today, such as enrolling in courses where the instructor presupposes skills specifically taught in the prerequisite courses at her institution but not, perhaps, in the same-named-and-numbered course at the student’s previous institution of enrollment.

As a faculty member in the Maryland system of higher education in the late 90s, I had the responsibility and opportunity to participate in the “discipline-based faculty committees” that were an integral part of that state’s plan for transfer in higher education. As a participant, I saw again and again similar looking courses concealing substantial differences where, for example, one institution’s version (and not necessarily that of a 2-year college) primarily focused upon grasp and memorization of content while another’s (and not necessarily that of a 4-year university) focused more heavily on analysis or interpretation of that content. And the differences here described in relation to individual courses reappear in the context of full academic programs, expectations for academic support, financial aid practices and policies, and student affairs services. We can bridge these differences, but to do so requires serious and sustained dialog between all of the institutions of higher education, as well as aligning curricula with primary and secondary schools. The package of bills that has been introduced creates both an opportunity and an increased demand for institutionalized forums for conducting such dialogs, and I very much hope that its introduction and eventual passage will lead to a systematic statewide approach of a kind I am suggesting here that we need.

In closing I once again want to thank the representatives for the opportunity to offer these remarks and to extend my offer to continue to participate and to further involve my colleagues at Rutgers University – Newark in working with you to realize the full potential of our state’s robust network of colleges and universities by fully tapping the talent of New Jersey’s greatest asset, its people.





**RUTGERS**

**Testimony on behalf of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
Presented by  
Jean McDonald Rash, University Director of Financial Aid  
Assembly Higher Education Committee  
June 11, 2014**

To Chairperson Riley and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on a topic of such critical importance to the citizens of New Jersey and the future prosperity of our state.

I am Jean McDonald Rash, Executive University Director of Financial Aid at Rutgers University, so the topic of keeping college access and affordability within reach for all New Jerseyans is part of my daily professional life and one that I believe is of great importance to our state. I know first-hand the challenges of paying for the increasing cost of higher education, not just in New Jersey, but all across our nation.

Protecting access, ensuring quality and streamlining costs in higher education is essential to our state's future. The benefits of higher education are numerous, with our state gaining as much, if not more, than individuals. Educational opportunity is a national value, one that provides students, regardless of their financial or personal circumstances, the chance to succeed and contribute to the well-being of our state and nation.

As such, Rutgers takes the position that the approach to controlling costs, ensuring both access to and completion of a college degree should be part of a comprehensive State plan for higher education. This plan should address the basic questions of how many students can be educated, the cost of educating these students, who bears that cost, as well as the job market in New Jersey in future years.

A coordinated and collaborative development of a statewide comprehensive plan would address the important and valid issues raised by this suggested legislation and would be the most effective way to address the needs of our students. An effective plan would be driven by facts and data, would seek the input of experts across all sectors of the educational community, and would address the urgent need in New Jersey for adequate, stable, reliable and formula based state funding for institutions of higher education.

Finally, I would urge that any plans and legislation should include mandatory financial literacy education for New Jersey students in elementary and secondary schools. I know from first-hand experience that many, if not most, students enter college with little or no information about the cost of higher education, the role of student loans and the responsibilities of the student borrower.

Very few understand basics about budgeting, have knowledge about checking and savings accounts, and even fewer can distinguish the difference between what they actually need and what they want.

A college education is one of the most important and worthwhile financial investments a person will make in their lifetime. Students should enter into that financial investment armed with the information and awareness they need to make appropriate financial choices. This will lead to their success and reinvestment in our state and national economies.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**Susanna Tardi, Ph.D.**

**AFT NJ State Federation AFL-CIO**

**Executive Vice -President—Higher Education**

**June 11, 2014**

Honorable Chair, Riley, Honorable Vice-Chair Giblin, and Honorable Committee Members, DiMaio, Gove, Jasey, McGuckin, Pinkin and Stender:

Good morning. My name is Susanna Tardi and I am testifying today as a concerned Sociology Professor from William Paterson University and as the AFT NJ State Federation Executive Vice President for Higher Education. On behalf of my colleagues testifying here today and the 30,000 faculty members, librarians, staff, health professionals and allied employees we represent, the leaders of the American Federation of Teachers—New Jersey State Federation (AFT NJSF/ AFL-CIO), the New Jersey Conference of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), and the Health Professionals and Allied Employees (HPAE/AFT-AFLCIO), I want to express sincere thanks for inviting us to share with you our concerns and recommendations regarding the Higher Education proposed Assembly Bills.

First of all, I would like to commend Assemblywoman Riley and Assemblyman Cryan for raising awareness on the issues confronting higher education in our State by sponsoring a number of Bills aimed at higher education reform. I am certain that you are providing this opportunity to hear testimony on the proposed higher education legislation for three reasons: 1) your desire to provide access and affordability regarding higher education to all students in our State; 2) your commitment and concern to maximize student success for all college/university students in the State of New Jersey; and 3) your interest in developing performance based funding formulas for public higher education which are based, in part, on reported graduation rates.

Faculty and staff support legislation that will relieve students of the enormous student debt that they have confronted and will continue to confront if tuition is

not controlled. We support legislation to reduce tuition costs or at least freeze tuition for an entering cohort of students, providing the subsequent cohorts are not made to bear the burden of significant tuition increases. We also believe that legislation providing low interest loans will help students reduce their workforce hours, focus more on their academics, and reduce student debt.

Regarding graduation rates, we agree that four year graduation rates at some of the State colleges/universities are appalling and six year graduation rates can be significantly improved. We do not support closing colleges/universities based on graduation rates. Graduation rate is a seductive metric. It seems to be a simple, easy to understand, and meaningful benchmark that can be used to measure performance, compare different institutions, and develop education policy. The reality is that graduation rate is viewed by most experts as a deeply flawed indicator which is complex to measure, interpret, and use. Graduation rates do not reflect the changing demographics of college enrollment and, as a result, are becoming less and less relevant as a good measure or predictor of student success or institutional performance. Graduation rates are based only on the graduation performance of first time, full time students and exclude the growing proportion of transfer, part time, and graduate students. Graduation rates also don't distinguish between students of different socio-economic backgrounds or students who enroll with strong academic skills versus those that require significant skill remediation. The percentage of the student body represented by graduation rate statistics varies significantly among different institutions.

Despite the limitations of graduation rates, this metric is enjoying popular, widespread misuse as a proxy for effectiveness and quality, and has become a significant part of the accountability and performance funding conversation. Early attempts to base performance funding formulas on graduation rates had a negative impact on higher education access and quality and were quickly scrapped. Colleges increased admission selectivity which was detrimental to minority and low-income student enrollment. Colleges also began to reduce graduation credit requirements, make course content less rigorous, and encourage more lenient grading – all in an effort to move students through the system. Several lessons were learned from these early missteps in performance funding. First, there is significant risk in overemphasizing the extent to which graduation rates are used to judge institutions and establish performance funding levels. Second, to account for different institutional missions and student body

demographics, it is likely that each institution will have a different graduation rate benchmark from which to assess its performance. Third, a balanced scorecard of different indicators is the best approach to establish education policy, assess performance, and encourage and reward responsible behavior.

Studies have shown that the academic preparation of incoming students is one of the most significant factors in predicting and explaining student performance and institution graduation rates. Data on remediation/basic skills clearly indicate that there is a relationship between remediation rates and graduation rates; as the remediation rates increase, the graduation rates decrease. This data needs to be interpreted cautiously. Our State Higher Education system is organized to provide all students the potential to earn a college degree. Each of our colleges/universities has a different mission. Do not conclude that the colleges and universities that address the needs of the population of students with remedial needs should "raise the bar"; that these students don't belong in four year colleges and universities, or do not belong in college period. The data reflects a lack of preparation to "hit the ground running", the way other students with non-remedial needs can. Despite the recent educational reformation in K-12, even if the changes have "fixed" the elementary and secondary school problems, the results will not be evident for many years.

Since our legislators have proposed performance based funding with an emphasis on graduation rates, particularly four year graduation rates, panic has set in at institutions with the lowest graduation rates and the highest remediation rates. The very mention of the words "performance based funding" is resulting in reactionary administrative plans for fear of reductions in state funding, rather than recommendations to enhance student success that are the product of shared governance. This is similar to the pattern seen in past failed attempts at implementing performance based funding when metrics drove negative behavior.

To illustrate how metrics drive questionable behavior, a number of NJ colleges/universities instituted new basic skills initiatives to decrease remediation rates. The overall objective was to have students complete their remedial needs in the summer prior to beginning their first academic year at the college/university and demonstrate basic skill proficiency by passing a test. Within a year, the number of incoming students reported as requiring remediation dropped significantly. Is it logical to conclude that years of deficiency

in basic areas such as reading, writing, and mathematics can be solved through a summer workshop or course? The faculty on the “front line” (those in the classroom) will tell you that these students may have improved but they are not “remediated”. However, the statistics indicate a decrease in the number of students needing remediation. These students will not be a part of future statistics involving remediation, yet they will continue to need mentoring and good academic support until they are truly remediated.

So how do we maximize success for this student population? At WPU we had a Sponsored Students Program for students who did not meet the characteristics necessary for regular admittance. These students had the highest retention and graduation rates, higher than students who were regular admits. This group succeeded because they were relatively small in size (200-300), received one-on-one advisement/mentoring from counselors, worked closely with faculty, and signed contracts whereby they agreed to participate in tutoring. The WPU Administration eliminated this program stating that the Sponsored Student Model was going to be applied to all students. The growth in academic support necessary to provide the one-on-one mentoring to “all students” is not feasible given flat funding from the State. It is important to note that reporting of remediation classification and rates varies from university to university. We support transparency and accountability, but encourage further examination regarding the ramifications of modifying reporting procedures.

Most of our four year colleges/universities have a 120 credit requirement for undergraduate degree completion. Student success is not about dividing the number of credits by the number of semesters in four academic years plus or minus one. In their first semester and possibly their entire first year of college, students with remedial needs should be assigned the **minimum** number of credits to maintain full-time status, so that they can continue improving their basic skills, focusing on their college level courses, while simultaneously working to pay for college, developing confidence that they can achieve, and establishing a GPA “cushion” prior to the complexity of the courses increasing. Setting a goal of striving to graduate in four years is, of course, fiscally responsible and ideal, but if our focus is on the quality of education, we must recognize that “one size does not fit all”.

The fundamental problem is the insufficient State funding that has been provided to our State colleges and universities. Unfortunately, there is no formulaic, “quick fix” to resolving the problem. Student success is not merely a statistic indicating no remediation needs, or the four or six year graduation rate. Developing a funding formula is a worthy goal, but there is no standard set of metrics that can be applied to all colleges/universities and respect individual college/university missions. Our long-standing commitment to providing all students in NJ access to higher education necessitates a thorough, systematic approach to maximizing student success. We applaud the Senate and the Assembly’s support to establish a Commission to carefully examine and make recommendations to engage in meaningful higher education reform in our State.

Respectfully, I wish to submit the following **recommendations**:

1. Examine the amount of money spent on the delivery of instruction in the classroom versus the administrative expenditures at each college/university.
2. Identify resources that can be shared by the State colleges/universities.
3. Require each college/university to form a working Committee with broad campus-wide representation including administrators, faculty, professional staff, and Union representation to develop a balanced scorecard that is aligned with the University’s mission to determine how funding should be established. The scorecards should be submitted to the Senate and Assembly Higher Education Committees for review and recommendations to the Secretary of Higher Education.
4. Focus on using performance based funding metrics as incentive measures, rather than punitive funding strategies that will negatively impact minorities and low income students.
5. Require colleges/universities to partner with K-12 to develop and implement on-line and in-class remediation programs in the junior year of high school for students who are “at risk” (deficient in basic skills).

When feasible, hold Assembly Higher Education Hearings on a rotating basis at the State colleges/universities. This will provide greater opportunity for faculty and staff participation, and increase the visibility of the Assembly Higher Education Committee members and their efforts to maximize quality education.

Assemblywoman Riley, I thank you and the other Assembly Higher Education Committee members for the opportunity to share my thoughts on accountability, accessibility, and student success, and I look forward to working with you in the future.