The State of College Readiness and Degree Completion in New York City

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About Graduate NYC

Graduate NYC (GNYC) operates as an innovation hub, helping the sector to explore and fully grasp the issues of college transition and success, and functioning as a resource archive offering the latest research and application of best practices in relevant programming. Additionally, GNYC fortifies the work of the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) and The City University of New York (CUNY) in their efforts to increase the college readiness and success of students throughout the five boroughs, with a particular focus on low-income students, students of color, and first-generation college goers. It does this by supporting both the NYC DOE’s Equity and Excellence agenda and CUNY’s Degree Completion Goals.

NYC DOE Equity and Excellence Goals
- By 2026, 84% of NYC DOE students will graduate high school on time
- Three-quarters of NYC DOE graduates will be college ready

CUNY Degree Completion Goals
- Double three-year graduation rate for associate degree programs by 2022 (36% target)
- Raise six-year graduation rate for bachelor’s degree programs by 10 percentage points by 2025 (65% target)
Areas of Impact

✦ **College Completion Innovation Fund**

Established in 2015 and managed by GNYC, the College Completion Innovation Fund (CCIF) pools the resources of participating funders and distributes monetary awards to colleges and nonprofit, youth-serving organizations for pioneering ideas that aim to increase college success rates for New York City’s young people. To date, the CCIF has invested more than $3.7 million dollars in twenty-one different projects across the five boroughs, facilitated a robust cross-sector learning community, and disseminated best practices gleaned from this learning community to its many partners via research reports, one-pagers, and other communications collateral.

✦ **Data Sharing, Research, and Policy**

GNYC leads efforts to conduct research and disseminate data to increase transparency, better understand student trajectories and potential obstacles to success, improve programs, and endorse policy and practice changes that will increase college readiness and degree completion rates in New York City. Work in this area of impact includes collaborating with postdoctoral researchers to conduct qualitative studies on issues related to college completion, mapping the broad array of college access and success programming throughout New York City, and writing and releasing reports such as this one.

✦ **Network for College Success**

GNYC implements the Network for College Success (N4CS) in partnership with CUNY’s Office of K-16 Initiatives to bolster the work of organizations that serve CUNY students. N4CS provides access to key information and knowledgeable staff across the University, shares real-time student data with community-based organizations (CBOs) to improve student programming, and assists its partner organizations in navigating the CUNY landscape.

✦ **Collaborative Curriculum Revision Project**

The large number of students entering college requiring remediation is one of several strong indicators of the need for improved alignment between high school and college curricula. To address this gap, GNYC developed the Collaborative Curriculum Revision Project (CCRP) in 2012, which is implemented in partnership with CUNY’s Office of K-16 Initiatives, the NYC DOE’s Office of Postsecondary Readiness, and several NYC DOE high schools and CUNY colleges. Over the course of the academic year, cohorts of high school teachers and college faculty work together with the support of a facilitator to align curricula vertically across the K-12/higher education divide. The project bridges the transition between NYC DOE public high schools and CUNY colleges by building a shared understanding of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices.
Introduction

As part of its ongoing commitment to educational equity in partnership with the NYC DOE, CUNY, and a diverse array of CBOs, GNYC released its first public report in 2016, which utilized 2014 NYC DOE and CUNY data. In this report, GNYC will detail progress made toward the NYC DOE and CUNY goals mentioned above—as well as noteworthy changes in policies and practices—since this time.

As the NYC DOE postsecondary enrollment rate for high school graduates has continued to climb, reaching a record high of 87% for the 2014 cohort that graduated in 2018, the city's vast network of educational institutions and organizations has further intensified its focus on facilitating college degree completion. During the 2019-2020 school year, 439 high schools participated in the NYC DOE's College Access for All program to prepare students to navigate their academic journeys after high school.

CUNY has advanced its objective to ensure that its students are completing their degrees in a timely fashion, implementing a concerted Academic Momentum Campaign and introducing systematic reforms to its developmental education model in order to place students more effectively in credit-bearing coursework. It established the abovementioned N4CS in 2018 to coordinate its college persistence and completion efforts with the constellation of CBOs supporting students attending CUNY. CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP)—which assists students in obtaining their associate degrees quickly and efficiently via academic, financial, and personal supports—has also been growing rapidly, and expanded to serve 25,000 students annually as of academic year 2019-20. As part of this scale-up, ASAP is now serving most incoming first-time, full-time freshmen at Bronx Community College.

Finally, the 2020 calendar year represents a pivotal point in GNYC's history, a full decade since it was established as a testament to the NYC DOE and CUNY's heightened commitment to systems-level collaboration. Accordingly, it is an appropriate time to reflect on the myriad accomplishments that New York City's public education institutions have achieved over the course of the last ten years, as well as to look ahead to the future and carefully consider the remaining critical work that lies ahead.

This report is organized into four primary sections that mirror the postsecondary academic trajectory: High School Graduation and Immediate College Enrollment, Persistence and Momentum, Transfer, and Completion. The data used has been obtained from four principal sources: CUNY's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment has provided institutional retention and graduation data, as well as the University’s academic momentum figures; the Research and Policy Support Group and the Office of Postsecondary Readiness at the NYC DOE have furnished the citywide high school graduation, college readiness, and immediate college enrollment data; and campus-specific policy information has been culled from interviews with institutional research personnel and executive administrators from those particular colleges. Data or information from sources other than these are indicated in the report's footnotes.
Framing Equity

GNYC presented the disaggregated data that appeared in its 2016 report to address the gaps that persist between black and Hispanic students and their Asian and white counterparts. While increasing rates of college readiness, associate degree completion, and bachelor’s degree enrollment among underrepresented student populations remains GNYC’s chief concern, it is important to periodically adjust perspective and view the data through the lens of new research in the field. John A. Powell, Director of the Othering & Belonging Institute at the University of California, Berkley, proposes a strategy of targeted universalism in handling matters of equity as they pertain to policy making, educational or otherwise. In his recent paper, “Targeted Universalism: Policy and Practice,” Powell asserts that:

> The emphasis on a shared aspiration raises the expectations of all groups and does not set the goal based upon what more privileged groups already have. For example, many interventions in education focus on the performance gap—a disparity between white students and their Latinx and Black counterparts. However, a shared goal would exceed the current performance of white students as well rather than use white performance as a baseline . . . Within targeted universalism, inter-group disparities should be used only as a diagnostic tool to assess relative performance, and not as a policy focus.¹

It is valuable to keep targeted universalism in mind when reviewing the information presented in this report. As CUNY and the NYC DOE have set universal targets, it is important to consider how all student populations are faring, respectively, with regard to these universal goals rather than designating the performance of a single group as the standard of academic success.

**National Context**

As a result of its tremendous system-wide effort to facilitate outcomes in college access programming, New York City surpasses the national average at which its high school graduates immediately enroll in college. Once enrolled, New York City college students fare similarly at two- and four-year public institutions relative to the rest of the country.

**High School Graduation:**

National 85%2  
New York City 76%3

**FIGURE 1: NEW YORK CITY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE RELATIVE TO SELECT LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

With a graduation rate of 76% for its 2014 cohort who graduated in 2018, New York City is on par with other large urban districts such as Chicago, and a single percentage point ahead of Boston, while Washington DC trails the group at 69% (Figure 1).

**Immediate College Enrollment**

**FIGURE 2: NEW YORK CITY IMMEDIATE COLLEGE ENROLLMENT RATE RELATIVE TO NATIONAL AVERAGE**

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that in October of 2018, 69% of the country’s recent high school graduates (those who had graduated that same year) were enrolled in college, a number that has fluctuated between 66% and 70% over the course of the last decade. New York City surpasses the national average markedly, with 81% of recent high school graduates immediately enrolling in college (Figure 2). This represents an increase of nearly 9 percentage points since 2010, which equates to nearly 12,000 more students enrolling in college during this time.

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3 Note that this is the four-year graduation rate for the NYC DOE’s 2014 cohort, and not the rate of 77% for the 2015 cohort used throughout this report. This is to provide a standard comparison year, as 2015 cohort graduation information was not available for the other school districts cited.


National Context (Continued)

Associate Degree Completion

FIGURE 3: CUNY ASSOCIATE DEGREE COMPLETION RATE RELATIVE TO NATIONAL AVERAGE

The three-year CUNY associate degree completion rate of 24% trails the national average for public institutions by a single percentage point.

Baccalaureate Degree Completion

FIGURE 4: CUNY BACCALAUREATE DEGREE COMPLETION RATE RELATIVE TO NATIONAL AVERAGE

The six-year CUNY bachelor’s degree completion rate of 60% is on par with the national average for all four-year public postsecondary institutions and all four-year postsecondary institutions in general, both of which are 60%.

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9 Ibid. CUNY graduation rates reflect college completion of matriculated first-time, full-time degree-seeking students in the fall semester of each year who earn an associate or baccalaureate degree within the given reporting period. These rates are reported at the systems level, meaning that a student who transfers from one college to another within the same system—in this instance, CUNY—is reported as a graduate (students who transfer out of the system entirely are not included in these totals). The system rate is not the average of the combined institutional rates. Later on in this report, where the graduation rates of individual colleges are discussed, the rates referenced are institutional ones.
Progress Since 2010

FIGURE 5: NYC DOE EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE GOALS AND CUNY DEGREE COMPLETION GOALS 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010 Baseline</th>
<th>2019 Progress</th>
<th>NYC DOE Equity and Excellence Goal</th>
<th>CUNY Degree Completion Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-YEAR HIGH SCHOOL</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADUATION</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLEGE READINESS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-YEAR ASSOCIATE</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEGREE COMPLETION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-YEAR BACCALAUREATE</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEGREE COMPLETION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 Four-year high school graduation refers to high school students who graduate four years after starting ninth grade for the first time with a regular diploma. College readiness is determined by student performance with regard to the CUNY proficiency requirements detailed on pages 11–13 of this report.
High School Graduation and Immediate College Enrollment

High School Graduation

Seventy-seven percent of the entire 2015 NYC DOE high school cohort graduated in 2019, an increase of more than 12 percentage points from the 2006 cohort who graduated in 2010. When disaggregated by race, 88% of the 2015 cohort’s Asian students graduated, along with 74% of its black students, 72% of its Hispanic students, and 85% of its white students. This represents an increase of nearly 6 percentage points among Asian students; nearly 13 percentage points and more than 14 percentage points among black and Hispanic students, respectively; and 7 percentage points among white students.

Immediate College Enrollment

There has been steady concentration on college access programming by the NYC DOE, CUNY’s Office of K-16 Initiatives, individual college campuses, and many local CBOs over the course of the last decade. The percentage of NYC DOE graduates who immediately enroll in college has remained high, steadily moving from the low to high seventies during this time. For this reason, the rate increased by just 4 percentage points since 2014, to 81% in 2018, and gains across racial groups were equally as modest (Figure 6). Black and Hispanic students reached rates of 77% and 76%, resulting in gains of 6 percentage points and 4 percentage points, respectively. Immediate college enrollment among white students rose nearly 4 percentage points to 86%, and that of Asian students increased by more than 2 percentage points to 91%.

Figure 6: Immediate College Enrollment by Race (NYC DOE Class of 2018)

While the NYC DOE pulls high school graduation data from official state graduation reporting, college readiness and postsecondary enrollment data are based on New York City calculations, resulting in small variations in cohort sizes between the two. These variations can be attributed to such factors as timing, treatment of out-of-district placement students, and school-level attribution for accountability, among others. Furthermore, the actual NYC DOE cohort sizes are marginally larger than the totals that appear in the charts used for this report, as the “Other/Not Reported” racial designation has been omitted.
The NYC DOE and CUNY share an immense student population: 57% of NYC DOE high school graduates who immediately enroll in a postsecondary institution do so at a CUNY college, or 27,783 of the 48,782 enrollees in the graduating class of 2018. Among these graduates, 30% matriculated to a two-year CUNY campus, while 27% matriculated to a four-year CUNY campus and another 17% matriculated to a State University of New York (SUNY) campus of either kind (Figure 7). Comparing the percentage of high school graduates from a cohort who immediately enroll at CUNY two-year campuses with that of those who enroll at four-year campuses provides a good indication of future degree completion prospects, as bachelor’s degree pathways yield far higher completion rates than those for associate degrees.

### FIGURE 7: COLLEGE ENROLLMENT BY POSTSECONDARY TYPE (2018 NYC DOE GRADUATES)

- **Enrolled in CUNY 2-Year College**: 30%
- **Enrolled in CUNY 4-Year College**: 27%
- **Enrolled in SUNY College**: 17%
- **Enrolled in NYS Private College, Out-of-State College, Vocational School, Public Service, Other**: 26%

Black and Hispanic students are far more likely than their Asian and white peers to be assigned to remediation, particularly as it pertains to math (Figure 8). Subsequently, black and Hispanic students are also far less likely than their Asian and white peers to begin their postsecondary studies at a four-year campus (Figure 9). When this is all taken into consideration collectively, it becomes clear that the degree pathways through which students enter college have implications on long-term equitable outcomes. Ensuring that more black and Hispanic students are accessing bachelor’s degree programs as their first point of entry into college would not merely be a beneficial measure for improving overall degree completion rates, it would also afford more students of color the opportunity to enjoy further academic, professional, and financial benefits that an associate degree pathway cannot always guarantee.

### FIGURE 8: ASSIGNMENT TO MATH REMEDIATION BY RACE (FALL 2019)

- **Asian**: 18%
- **Black**: 42%
- **Hispanic**: 39%
- **White**: 28%

### FIGURE 9: FIRST-TIME FRESHMAN ENROLLMENT, BY DEGREE TYPE AND RACE (FALL 2019)

- **Associate Degree**:
  - **Asian**: 14%
  - **Black**: 30%
  - **Hispanic**: 33%
  - **White**: 40%

- **Baccalaureate Degree**: 22%
College Access for All, the Counselor Professional Learning Community, and College Bridge for All are just a few of the programs that the NYC DOE and CUNY—along with an array of nonprofit partners—are implementing to address college readiness and summer melt.

**COLLEGE ACCESS FOR ALL**

As part of Mayor Bill de Blasio’s Equity and Excellence agenda, College Access for All (CA4A) seeks to ensure that New York City public high schools have the resources required to foster a culture of college and career readiness, so that their students can capably develop their own rewarding postsecondary plans. In addition to having eliminated the CUNY application fee for qualifying low-income students and making the SAT available for free to all high school juniors during the school day, CA4A provides 439 participating high schools with three years of professional learning and fiscal support as it pursues the following three core objectives:

- **Access to Critical Postsecondary Planning Milestones**
  - Schools ensure all students have access to and engage in key postsecondary matriculation milestones, with an emphasis on students who have been historically underrepresented in college

- **Fostering Future-Ready Cultures**
  - Schools build a robust and sustainable college- and career-ready culture to reach every student at every grade level

- **Staff Capacity Building**
  - Schools develop staff knowledge and skills to tailor individual postsecondary plans for every student

Working in partnership with CA4A to support its mission is the CUNY Office of K-16 Initiatives’ College Counseling Initiative (CCI). CCI administers two programs to ensure that NYC DOE students receive reliable college advising, both while in high school and when transitioning to college:

**THE COUNSELOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY**

The Counselor Professional Learning Community meets regularly throughout the academic year and maintains a space for college counselors and advisers to continue to hone their advising skills through sharing best practices, as well as build their knowledge of CUNY support programs.

**COLLEGE BRIDGE FOR ALL**

By hiring and training current college students, or “College Coaches,” to support graduating seniors at participating high schools to matriculate into postsecondary opportunities, College Bridge for All seeks to increase college enrollment. This year, the program is serving approximately 15,000 graduating seniors across 103 high schools throughout New York City with the help of 130 of these College Coaches.12 Next year, it will expand to serve all students graduating from a New York City public high school.

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College Readiness

The percentage of college-ready NYC DOE high school graduates climbed to 71% in 2019—an increase of nearly 37 percentage points since 2010—which accounts for the large increase in college readiness between 2010 and 2011. Asian and white students graduated high school college ready at rates of 88% and 85%, respectively, while black and Hispanic students did so at rates of 60% and 63%, respectively, making important strides toward meeting this universal benchmark (Figure 10).

When comparing the 2006 and 2015 cohorts as a whole, marked gains in college readiness were recorded across all racial groups over the nine years between the graduation of the 2006 NYC DOE cohort in 2010 and that of the 2015 cohort in 2019 (Figure 11). The number of college-ready graduates among Asian students rose nearly 25 percentage points to 78%, while the number among white students rose more than 29 percentage points to 73%. Additionally, the number of college-ready graduates among black students and Hispanic students reached 45% and 46%, a gain of nearly 33 and nearly 34 percentage points, respectively.

In 2011, the NYC DOE began to include the ACT and CUNY Assessment Test in its college readiness calculations, which accounts for the large increase in college readiness between 2010 and 2011. These percentages are based on rounded values.
These increases can largely be explained by deliberate adjustments CUNY has made with regard to its remedial assignment policies that have allowed a far larger number of students to begin college in credit-bearing courses since 2017. Another key factor is likely the sustained accountability being placed on principals and high schools for the postsecondary outcomes of their graduates over the course of the last decade. CUNY has changed its remedial practices because it determined that more students were able to succeed in credit-bearing courses than were being assigned to them (Figure 12). This is especially true when taking into account the type of math course students were required to take for their intended majors (i.e., statistics or quantitative reasoning, as opposed to college algebra for most majors). One aspect of this change is that CUNY eliminated the requirement that students must have completed an Algebra 2 course by the end of their junior year of high school, in addition to having earned a high score on a Common Core Regents math exam. Algebra 2 courses roughly correspond to college algebra, and it is excessive for students to have learned advanced algebra in high school just to qualify for enrollment in a college algebra course.

Modifications in assignment to remedial education are part of CUNY’s comprehensive remediation reform strategy, which also seeks to make developmental education both more effective and efficient for students. Not only have some studies shown that developmental courses could potentially make students less likely to persist toward a degree, but also they have demonstrated that many students assigned to remediation would have been capable of earning passing grades if initially placed in credit-bearing courses.15

At CUNY, only 43% of community college freshmen will complete gateway math in their first year. Furthermore, only 18% of students pursuing associate degrees who are assigned to math remediation will graduate within three years, compared to 32% of those who are not assigned to math remediation. Most importantly, black and Hispanic students are nearly twice as likely to be assigned to remediation in math when compared to white students, and nearly three times more likely when compared to Asian students. Thus, these comprehensive changes to remediation are a key aspect of addressing the stark equity gap that persists among CUNY degree holders.

It is clear that former placement practices have proven ineffective in determining which students will be capable of succeeding in credit-bearing courses. In 2019, the proficiency tests that CUNY had used to screen applicants for remediation was taken off the market and substituted with a new version. Rather than incorporating a new exam, CUNY decided to stop using standardized placement tests to assign students to remediation, replacing them with a “multiple measures” approach to gauging student proficiency: an algorithm that takes into account high school grades, SAT scores, and Regents Exam scores. The use of multiple measures in this regard has long been common practice at the California Community Colleges, where it is mandated that colleges consider two or more criteria in the assessment and placement of their students.16 The Center for Analysis of Postsecondary Readiness—a partnership of research scholars led by the Community College Research Center at Teachers College, Columbia University and MDRC—has recently conducted a number of random assignment studies of multiple-measures placement. Results from the first study involving seven SUNY community colleges have thus far yielded broadly positive yet limited impacts.17

In addition to changing placement practices, CUNY is also working to substitute traditional non-credit remedial courses that are prerequisites to credit-bearing courses with “corequisite” courses. Corequisite courses allow students who are not proficient to enroll in credit-bearing math and English courses while utilizing required academic supports. These supports can take the form of additional instructional hours, as well as mandatory workshops or tutoring.

Traditional remedial courses are non-credit bearing and cause a high percentage of students to drop out before moving on to credit-bearing coursework. Research has demonstrated that the majority of students referred to remediation fail to complete course sequences because they have neglected to enroll in a preceding or subsequent course, not because they have failed the actual course material itself.\(^\text{18}\) Far too many possible exit points exist for students in extended remedial sequences, and corequisite courses minimize these exit points while accelerating the rate at which students can potentially earn college credits.\(^\text{19}\)

CUNY's preferred metric in gauging the effect of its developmental education redesign is the percentage of all full-time freshmen in associate programs who completed a gateway course within their first year—that is, a credit-bearing course that can be applied toward degree requirements. Forty-three percent of associate freshmen completed a gateway math course within their first year in 2018, a jump of 11 percentage points since fall 2014 (Figure 13). This represents tangible headway, but it remains to be seen whether CUNY's sweeping changes to its remediation policy will stimulate further progress.

**FIGURE 13: GATEWAY MATH COMPLETION AMONG FULL-TIME, FIRST-TIME COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS (2014–18)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Completion Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From 2014 to 2018, there has been a steep decline in the percentage of full-time, first-time community college freshmen enrolled in non-credit and remedial math courses—which has decreased from 48% to 29%—leading to more rapid credit accumulation. This is encouraging progress, as CUNY receives a higher proportion of NYC DOE graduates who are not college ready when compared to other postsecondary institutions (Figure 14).

**FIGURE 14: COLLEGE READINESS AMONG NYC DOE GRADUATES BY ENROLLMENT TYPE (NYC DOE CLASS OF 2018)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment Type</th>
<th>College Ready</th>
<th>Not College Ready</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-CUNY Students</td>
<td>N=16,778 (80%)</td>
<td>N=4,221 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUNY Students</td>
<td>N=20,766 (75%)</td>
<td>N=7,017 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Not Immediately Enrolled in College</td>
<td>N=4,924 (43%)</td>
<td>N=6,513 (57%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


PREMATRICULATION ALTERNATIVES TO REMEDIAL COURSES
There are a number of affordable CUNY programs that students have the option to register for prior to matriculation, in order to avoid costly and time-consuming remedial courses.

CUNY START
CUNY Start is a semester-long, pre-matriculation intervention in which students with significant remedial needs receive intensive preparation in reading, writing, and academic math, as well as targeted college advisement, in order to prepare them for college-level coursework.

MATH START
Math Start is a free eight-week, pre-matriculation intervention that seeks to eliminate math remedial education needs, helping students to increase their understanding of math so that they can meet CUNY’s proficiency standards and be prepared to succeed in college.

UNIVERSITY SKILLS IMMERSION PROGRAM
The University Skills Immersion Program (USIP) includes an array of free, non-credit remedial workshops and courses that are developed separately at each CUNY campus. It serves both incoming students in the summer before they matriculate and continuing students in winter and summer sessions.
Persistence and Momentum

The CUNY Academic Momentum Campaign was designed to support the University’s degree completion goals by focusing on three key strategies intended to propel students along their degree pathways early on: changing the institutional culture around how many credits students should attempt and how that is communicated, increasing the percentage of students who earn 30 credits a year; increasing the percentage of students who successfully complete gateway English and math courses within the first year; and introducing semester-by-semester degree maps for every major, to be used in advising at all CUNY colleges to ensure that students have a clear road map to completion. These momentum strategies are being implemented in conjunction with other system-wide reforms regarding how students place into and exit developmental education, as discussed earlier in this report.

Steady credit accumulation progress was made in 2018, as 15% of all CUNY full-time, first-time freshmen in associate programs earned 30 credits within their first year (Figure 15). This represents a gain of nearly 8 percentage points since 2014. Additionally, 56% of all freshmen in bachelor’s programs earned 30 credits within the same time frame, including pre-college credits, a gain of more than 10 percentage points since 2014 (Figure 16). Queens College saw one of the most substantial increases in this measure of credit accumulation at the individual senior campuses, and reached 60% with a notable 15-percentage-point increase (see page 19 for further details on the academic momentum work underway at Queens College). These encouraging gains toward CUNY degree completion goals occurred despite the fact that the percentage of first-time freshmen who had participated in either the College Now or Early College Initiative programs increased only modestly.

FIGURE 15: PERCENTAGE OF FALL FULL-TIME FRESHMEN IN ASSOCIATE PROGRAMS WHO EARN 30 CREDITS OR MORE IN THE FIRST YEAR (2013–18)

FIGURE 16: PERCENTAGE OF FALL FULL-TIME FRESHMEN IN BACCALAUREATE PROGRAMS WHO EARN 30 CREDITS OR MORE IN THE FIRST YEAR (2014–18)
PRE-COLLEGE CREDIT PROGRAMS

The NYC DOE and CUNY collaborate on both College Now and the Early College Initiative, which facilitate postsecondary academic momentum by enabling students to earn college credits prior to graduating high school.

COLLEGE NOW

Launched in 1984 at Kingsborough Community College, College Now offers pre-college and remedial courses, college credit courses, college and career awareness workshops, and campus visits for NYC DOE high school students. Since 2000, it has expanded to all CUNY undergraduate campuses, serving 23,000 students from 470 different high schools.

CUNY EARLY COLLEGE INITIATIVE

CUNY Early College Initiative (ECI) streamlines the academic trajectories of students traditionally underrepresented in higher education, promoting social and economic mobility by affording them the opportunity to earn up to two years of college credit, or an associate degree, at a partnering CUNY campus. Comprising the largest urban early college high school network in the United States, it has developed and established 17 high schools using this model.

FIGURE 17: AVERAGE CREDITS EARNED BY END OF GRADE 12 (2019 ECI GRADUATES)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTEMPTED</th>
<th>EARNED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=1,499

This number represents the total graduates from across all 17 ECI high schools in 2019.
MOMENTUM AT WORK: THE QC IN 4 INITIATIVE AT QUEENS COLLEGE

It should come as no surprise that the CUNY campus that saw one of the largest gains in freshman credit accumulation has also implemented one of the most visible and comprehensive school-specific iterations of CUNY’s Academic Momentum Campaign. Queens College’s QC in 4 initiative guarantees that its incoming full-time freshmen will graduate in four years, provided that they adhere to necessary program requirements, and students sign a four-year graduation commitment contract with the school as part of admission. The document plainly states what is expected of students as part of the program, as well as the resources and assistance Queens College pledges to provide during their time at the school. Furthermore, the QC in 4 promise extends past student-level supports and even incorporates a more effectual alignment of Queens College’s administration with its academic departments to undergird this four-year degree completion pathway. Not only does the QC in 4 contract assure students of course availability to enable completion of its four-year Academic Program Map, but also it guarantees that if they are unable to graduate in a timely fashion due to course unavailability, Queens College will ensure that the course or an equivalent course becomes available.

Launched in fall 2017, QC in 4 is an “opt-out” model—new full-time freshmen are automatically registered unless they intentionally choose to withdraw. It includes such components as a new student orientation; mandatory advising (holds are placed on incoming freshman accounts for winter and spring course registration until they schedule an appointment with an academic advisor); and targeted communications to students every semester to make sure they are kept regularly apprised of their progress toward timely degree completion (e.g., notifications that they did not complete 15 credits in a semester, or 30 credits over the course of the year). These approaches have yielded appreciable and inspiring improvement in first-year credit accumulation. Queens College has seen the percentage of its students earning thirty or more credits by the end of their freshman year (including summer) rise from 53% in 2016—the year before the implementation of QC in 4—to 60% in 2018, despite a significantly larger cohort of entering students.

A campus-wide implementation emphasized by QC in 4 that has likely contributed to the rise in freshman credit accumulation is Queens College’s offering registration for winter, spring, and summer classes in early November of the previous year. It strongly encourages students to take advantage of summer sessions to maintain or even accelerate degree progress. In this manner, the school seeks to streamline the academic year by standardizing winter and summer course enrollment, prompting students to distribute their credit hours more efficiently. Relatedly, Queens College also promotes the use of newly reinstated year-round Pell, the opportunity for eligible students to receive additional Pell funds if they are registered for at least six credits during summer terms that fall within the academic year.21 Summer Pell eligibility had been eliminated by the federal government in 2012, due to bipartisan concern regarding the hefty costs associated with it, but was restored in June 2018 as a result of pressure from the nation’s community college officials.22

ADVANCING A CULTURE OF PERSISTENCE AND COMPLETION AT LAGUARDIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A student-centered approach to learning is one that gives priority to student voices and needs, and integrates their input into developing new programs and changing policies. LaGuardia Community College (LAGCC) administrators held a focus group in 2018 to incorporate student voices in aiming to rectify a troubling statistic: Roughly 36% of the college’s students were already off-track to graduate after only being enrolled for a single semester. These administrators asked current and former students how the campus might develop tools that effectively respond to the uncertainty with which many first-year community college students regard college policies and procedures. The feedback they received was candid and clear: “Know the student, give students the tools they need, and teach students to teach themselves.” In response, LAGCC, which has long distinguished itself as an authority on executing uniquely innovative programming, released a mobile application in March 2019. The application places dynamic, easy-to-use features in the palm of a student’s hand, allowing them to play an active role in maintaining their own degree progress. Developed by the school’s Information Technology department in conjunction with advisors, administrators, faculty, and students, and available on iPhone and Android, it allows students to schedule advising appointments, check progress made with regard to GPA and credits earned, and even view the amount of lifetime Pell Grant eligibility they have remaining in their academic careers.
Transfer

For the 2018-19 academic year, 28,109 of the 50,821 total students admitted to CUNY senior and comprehensive colleges, or 55%, were transfer students. At Lehman College, the campus that received the largest number of transfer students, it was 3,501 of 4,597, or 76% (Figure 18). Despite the fact that transfers constitute such a substantial part of the CUNY student body—and have for quite some time—the highly specific set of circumstances they encounter had not been thoroughly assessed until relatively recently. For additional context on where students attending CUNY four-year colleges are transferring from, see Figure 19.

In her 2017 qualitative research study *Increasing Success for Two-to-Four-Year Transfer Students Within the City of New York*, Christina Ciocca Eller identified several key ways in which the college experiences of transfer students differ from those of their first-time freshman classmates at CUNY campuses:

- Transfer students must make important academic decisions within the first few weeks of transfer that have wide-ranging ramifications on their degree trajectory, both academically and financially.
- Transfer students often begin at their new schools in intermediate or advanced courses with students who have been on the campuses for two years or more. They can quickly fall behind if lacking the necessary academic preparation or understanding of course expectations at the senior college level.
- Ineffective or inconsistent communication regarding course registration periods, financial aid deadlines, and major-specific requirements are often cited as chief causes of transfer student confusion.

**FIGURE 18: ADMISSIONS TO UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS AT SENIOR AND COMPREHENSIVE COLLEGES (ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-2019)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>First-Time Freshmen</th>
<th>Undergraduate Transfers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BARUCH</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BROOKLYN</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITY</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUNTER</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHN JAY</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEHMAN</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDGAR EVERS</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYCCT</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUEENS</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATEN ISLAND</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YORK</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=Total Number of Students
Transfer students require flexible scheduling with regard to school supports to fit their unique circumstances, which often include responsibilities that fall outside the realm of academic coursework.

Transfer students frequently experience a prevailing sense of isolation and often feel disconnected from both one another and the greater campus community.

Taken together, these elements of the transfer experience contribute to the lower completion rates experienced by transfer students. CUNY research has demonstrated that a sizeable performance gap remains between transfer students and first-time freshmen among those pursuing a bachelor’s degree at the University. Controlling for all other variables, transfer students:

- Are less likely to graduate with a bachelor’s degree within four years of earning 30–60 credits.
- Graduate at lower rates, due in part to socioeconomic challenges and insufficient academic preparation at the high school level.
- Advance less efficiently in the bachelor’s program.

A simple comparison of all full-time transfer students who entered a bachelor’s program in 2005 to first-time freshmen of the same cohort would illustrate that transfer students were 6 percentage points more likely to graduate by fall 2009. However, this is not an acceptable juxtaposition, as transfer students already enjoy a sizable lead in credit accumulation, earning an average of 50 credits from their associate programs prior to transfer. To accurately reflect the fact that transfer students have had the opportunity to earn more credits than their first-time freshmen peers in advance of entering baccalaureate study, analysis must be limited to students who have earned 30–60 credits (Figure 20).

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23 "Do Transfer Students Perform as Well as First-Time Freshman?" Office of Policy Research, City University of New York, 2009, https://www2.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/oira/policy/research-briefs/brief3.pdf. It should be noted that though the research for this policy brief was formally conducted in 2009, the performance data for both student samples have been analyzed internally by the CUNY Office of Policy Research on multiple occasions since, though the findings were not released publicly. This subsequent analysis has yielded nearly identical results.
Upon examining the data in this manner, transfer students are nearly 25 percentage points less likely to graduate. Of this 25-percentage-point disparity, 18.2 points can be collectively explained by demographic attributes such as race/ethnicity, gender, age, and immigration status; high school academic performance, academic performance in the first two semesters of a bachelor’s program; and enrollment choices such as part-time attendance. Even after adjusting for these variables, a marked 6.4-percentage-point difference remains.

When this is taken into consideration along with the fact that transfers earn lower GPAs in the first semester and year of their bachelor’s programs and make slower credit accumulation progress than their native freshman counterparts, it becomes even more manifest that concrete improvements must be made to accommodate this constituency that comprises such a large portion of the CUNY student body.

Ciocca Eller’s research found that many transfer students arrive at their four-year institution with a deep commitment to earning their bachelor’s degrees, a commitment that often surpasses that of first-time freshmen. A key determining factor of transfer student success is the ability to find their academic “home” at a four-year institution. Colleges can foster such an environment by creating more opportunities to connect meaningfully with the campus through academic departments and CBO partners. Several CUNY campuses and CBOs have introduced initiatives to leverage the commitment of transfer students via major-specific programming and other peer mentoring programs, the progress of which GNYC will report on in the future.

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24 Research from this study demonstrated that full-time freshmen pass an average total of 12.3 credits in their first semester and 24.3 credits in their first year, while transfer students pass an average of 23.6 credits and 19.1 credits over the same durations, respectively.

25 The study further demonstrated that full-time freshmen maintained a GPA of 2.9 during their first semester and a 2.8 GPA over the course of their first year, while transfer students earned a GPA of 2.4 and 2.5 over these same durations, respectively.
Completion

The foremost indication of how CUNY continues to advance as a system of postsecondary study is the state of its associate and bachelor’s degree completion rates. Since 2010, the three-year associate degree completion rate has risen an impressive 12 percentage points to 24% (Figure 22), while the six-year bachelor’s degree completion rate has grown to 60% (Figure 23), another increase of 12 percentage points over the same duration. As mentioned at the beginning of this report, the national three-year graduation rate among students pursuing associate degrees at public institutions is 25%, while the six-year graduation rate for students pursuing bachelor’s degrees is 60%.

FIGURE 22: 3-YEAR ASSOCIATE DEGREE COMPLETION RATE (2007–2016 COHORTS)

When comparing the three-year associate degree completion rate of the 2007 cohort to that of the 2016 cohort disaggregated by race, the completion rate of Asian students increased to 29%, a gain of nearly 13 percentage points, while that of white students experienced a gain of 11 percentage points to arrive at 26%. The completion rates of black and Hispanic students increased 11 and 13 percentage points, reaching 21% and 24%, respectively (Figure 24).

FIGURE 24: PROGRESS IN 3-YEAR GRADUATION RATE OF FULL-TIME, FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN IN ASSOCIATE DEGREE PROGRAMS BY RACE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010 Baseline</th>
<th>2019 Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASIAN</td>
<td>16% (2019)</td>
<td>13% (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>10% (2019)</td>
<td>11% (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HISPANIC</td>
<td>11% (2019)</td>
<td>13% (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>15% (2019)</td>
<td>11% (2019)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When comparing the six-year bachelor’s degree completion rate of the 2004 bachelor’s cohort to that of the 2013 cohort disaggregated by race, the completion rate of Asian students increased to 67%, a gain of 10 percentage points, while that of white students experienced a gain of 7 percentage points, rising to 64% (Figure 25). Black and Hispanic students saw gains of 13 and 14 percentage points, reaching completion rates of 41% and 44%, respectively. These two student groups are making dramatic strides toward CUNY’s universal bachelor’s degree completion goal, though this progress must be accelerated substantially if they are to be on pace to reach a rate of 65% by 2025.

FIGURE 25: PROGRESS IN 6-YEAR GRADUATION RATE OF FULL-TIME, FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN BACCALAUREATE DEGREE PROGRAMS BY RACE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010 Baseline</th>
<th>2019 Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASIAN</td>
<td>56% (2019)</td>
<td>11% (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>38% (2019)</td>
<td>13% (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HISPANIC</td>
<td>40% (2019)</td>
<td>14% (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>57% (2019)</td>
<td>7% (2019)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACCELERATED STUDY IN ASSOCIATE PROGRAMS

Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) offers a comprehensive package of supports for students pursuing associate degrees at six community and three comprehensive colleges within the CUNY system: Borough of Manhattan Community College, Bronx Community College, Hostos Community College, Kingsborough Community College, LaGuardia Community College, Queensborough Community College, Medgar Evers College, College of Staten Island, and the New York City College of Technology. These services include access to financial resources, structured pathways that encourage momentum toward a degree, and personalized academic and career advisement.

Since its inaugural cohort in 2007, ASAP has admitted more than 59,000 students and boasts an average three-year graduation rate of 53.4% across eight cohorts from fall 2007 to fall 2014—more than double the rate of 24.6% among its comparison group students over the same period of time (Figure 26). ASAP students also fare significantly better when accounting for more long-term CUNY outcomes, as 63.6% had earned either an associate or a bachelor’s degree six years after beginning the program, compared to 43.3% of comparison group students. Due to its recent expansion, the ASAP model will become increasingly fundamental in boosting associate degree completion rates as CUNY seeks to reach its 2022 target of 35%.

FIGURE 26: 3-YEAR GRADUATION RATE OF ASAP AND COMPARISON GROUP STUDENTS (FALL 2007–2014 COHORTS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASAP</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACCELERATE, COMPLETE, AND ENGAGE

Modeled after the highly effective ASAP structure, the Accelerate, Complete, and Engage program (ACE) was established in fall 2015 at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, offering the same supports to bachelor’s degree students and seeking to achieve a four-year graduation rate of 50% among its participants. Of the 262 students who formed this initial cohort, 152—or 58%—graduated in four years. This is 16 percentage points higher than the rate of a matched comparison group of students at John Jay College, and more than 26 percentage points higher than the national average for public colleges. ACE has expanded to Lehman College as of fall 2019 and is serving cohorts of both first-time, full-time freshmen and full-time transfer students.26

The Work Ahead

The NYC DOE has nearly achieved its stated objectives pertaining to timely high school graduation and college readiness among graduates, which were updated in the city’s OneNYC 2050 report, to reflect the fact that more progress was made in recent years than was initially anticipated:

- The four-year graduation rate for the 2015 NYC DOE cohort was 77%, an increase of 9 percentage points since 2010 and 7 percentage points shy of the goal of 84%.
- The rate of college readiness among NYC DOE graduates was 71% in 2019, an increase of 37 percentage points since 2010. This is 4 percentage points shy of the NYC DOE’s 75% goal but exceeds the goal of 67% as established by GNYC upon its founding in 2010.

It is necessary to reiterate that a principal determining factor in how the NYC DOE’s college readiness benchmark has been reached—in addition to the NYC DOE’s tremendous investment in College Access for All—is the implementation of large-scale modifications in CUNY remediation practices. The University seeks to place more students in credit-bearing coursework that can be applied toward a degree, as current research has shown that misplacement into remediation is far more common than misplacement into college-level courses. Whether such changes will fuel a precipitous increase in associate freshman gateway course completion and credit accumulation remains to be seen, as they have not yet been implemented in their entirety. GNYC will closely monitor these momentum components in the coming years and report on progress made.
The fact that the immediate college enrollment rate has also climbed in conjunction with the high school graduation rate over the past few years further denotes that college access is not nearly as formidable a barrier as it once was in the recent past:

- The percentage of NYC DOE graduates who immediately enroll in college was 81% in 2018, which exceeds the goal of 77% as established by GNYC upon its founding in 2010.

Unfortunately, New York City public schools remain largely segregated by race and income, which prevents all student groups from achieving at higher levels. GNYC will continue to stay apprised of the School Diversity Advisory Group to determine how its policy and implementation recommendations are followed, and whether these efforts decidedly improve college readiness rates throughout New York City.28

This report has also addressed many promising trends in CUNY’s momentum and persistence numbers:

- The percentage of full-time freshmen in associate programs who earn thirty credits or more in their first year reached 15% in 2018, an increase of 7 percentage points since 2014.
- The percentage of full-time freshmen in baccalaureate programs who earn thirty credits or more in their first year reached 56%, an increase of 11 percentage points since 2014.
- The percentage of full-time freshmen in baccalaureate programs who earn sixty credits or more by the end of their second year reached 42%, an increase of 8 percentage points since 2014.

These trends have contributed to significant gains in rates of degree completion among both associate and bachelor’s degree students:

- The three-year degree completion rate of the 2016 cohort of full-time, first-time freshmen in CUNY associate degree programs was 24%, double the rate of 12% among the 2007 cohort. This is 12 percentage points shy of the CUNY goal of 36% by 2022.
- The six-year degree completion rate of the 2013 cohort of full-time, first-time freshmen in CUNY bachelor’s degree programs was 60%, a gain of 12 percentage points over the 2004 cohort. This is 5 percentage points shy of the CUNY goal of 65% by 2025.

However, some of the data collected indicates there are still remaining difficulties that must be rectified if these goals are to come to fruition.

*The percentage of associate freshmen earning twenty and thirty credits within their first year of study improved in 2017, though far more progress is still necessary.* A sufficient number of corequisite courses must be put in place to further advance this improvement, and CUNY is determining further measures it can employ to boost the degree momentum of associate freshmen.

*Many of the overarching momentum improvements that impacted the entire 2017 cohort were due to a set of schools that have strong momentum initiatives in place. When the numbers are analyzed by school, some campuses exhibited insignificant or no gains.* It is crucial that all CUNY colleges strive to execute each mechanism of the Academic Momentum Campaign to ensure maximum effectiveness, with more campuses implementing all-encompassing momentum initiatives. The expansion of standardized degree maps at more campuses coupled with the recent reinstatement of year-round Pell scholarships described above are likely to have a notable impact on CUNY’s degree completion climate. There are undoubtedly more promising updates for GNYC to share with its partners in the coming years, and it looks forward to maintaining its commitment to New York City’s public education institutions in doing so.

28 *Making the Grade: The Path to Read Integration and Equity for NYC Public School Students*, School Diversity Advisory Group, 2019, https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/1c478c_4de7a85cae884c52a8d48750e085872.pdf.
Any kind of reporting on the state of college readiness and success in New York City would be incomplete if it failed to address the factor that will likely have the greatest impact on postsecondary outcomes in the near—if not foreseeable—future, COVID-19. The novel coronavirus that first reached the United States in late January 2020 has since spread rapidly and upended nearly every facet of American life, both large and small. CUNY’s response to the pandemic was swift and sweeping. After an instructional recess of five business days in March, the system moved all its courses online for the remainder of the spring 2020 semester and the entirety of the summer 2020 semester as part of its Distance Learning initiative. Hundreds of thousands of laptops and tablets were distributed to ensure that as many students as possible could participate in online courses. Soon after, Mayor Bill de Blasio and Chancellor Richard Carranza followed suit and officially announced that New York City public schools would not reopen during the 2019-2020 academic year, also adopting an online learning format for these students and distributing hundreds of thousands of additional internet-ready devices.

The long-term consequences that these dramatic changes to the local academic climate will have on high school graduation, postsecondary readiness and enrollment, momentum, and college graduation remain to be seen and will become clearer over the course of the coming academic year. The devastating impact that the coronavirus pandemic continues to have on the American economy will likely have an effect on who ultimately chooses to enroll at CUNY; staggering unemployment rates will send some New Yorkers back to school, while an increasing number of food and housing insecure students may leave as the associated costs escalate beyond their reach. Moreover, students who previously attended residential schools may instead decide to commute to CUNY (or take online classes for the time being). If the Great Recession of 2008, which spanned more than eighteen months, is any indication, there are a number of trends worth noting:

- People twenty-five and over initially thronged to community colleges after the Great Recession, only to return to the workforce when the economy began to improve. The scope of the current unemployment crisis is far greater, suggesting that a large number of unemployed adults will pursue a two-year degree to improve their employment prospects for when the job market is eventually revived. A key economic element that proved to be beneficial in 2009 was the TAACCCT (Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College Career Training) program, through which the United States Department of Labor invested nearly $2 billion in workforce training programs for community colleges in every state. Congress has not yet enacted similar funding in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

- Community colleges are expected to receive a temporary influx of students who otherwise might have enrolled in four-year colleges and are seeking to avail themselves of more affordable pathways. It is an optimal time for community colleges to emphasize their standing as an inexpensive postsecondary entry point on the path toward a four-year degree and one that will perhaps impel them to establish more seamless transfer pathways.

- It is believed that the economic disruption caused by the coronavirus will lead to increased interest among high school students in dual enrollment programs, which allow them to enroll in postsecondary courses for transferable college credit. This is primarily true in states such as New York that subsidize dual enrollment, as many low-income families view it as an opportunity for their children to get a cost-efficient head start on college.29

Exactly how these factors play out will have enormous ramifications for how the NYC DOE and CUNY serve students henceforth. Moreover, given the budget constraints that both face in the coming fiscal year, there are further potential implications to consider, including whether these leaner budgets will affect the quality of student supports and instruction, as well as course availability and, ultimately, timely degree completion. It will be a chief priority of GNYC’s to track developments in how New York City’s public education system is responding to the coronavirus and the subsequent effects these measures have on the established goals of the NYC DOE and CUNY. GNYC will be observing the manner in which enrollment, momentum, and retention change over the next few years; how the population of students that benefits from public college shifts; and how these systems ally with local community organizations to ensure that New York City continues to move toward a more equitable educational future.