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Exploring Shifting Moments of Remediation: An Analysis of Policies of Developmental Education Policies in the City University of New York

Charles Jordan
The Graduate Center, City University of New York

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EXPLORING SHIFTING MOMENTS OF REMEDIATION: AN ANALYSIS OF POLICIES
OF DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION POLICIES IN THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW
YORK

by

Charles R. Jordan

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Urban Education in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2018
Exploring Shifting Moments of Remediation: An Analysis of Policies of Developmental Education Policies In The City University of New York

by

Charles R. Jordan

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Urban Education in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Chair of Examining Committee

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
For decades the City University of New York has served as a model for public higher education in the United States. Since 1969, CUNY has attempted to construct policies that support the postsecondary ambitions of New York’s underrepresented students. The era of Open Admissions that ushered in the 1970s remains one of the greatest social experiments in the history of higher education, permitting access to the university to all local high school graduates. Through fiscal erosion and shifts in legislative policy, the open admissions period devolved into a period of stagnation and low standards over the next thirty years. By the late 1990s, a newly appointed chancellor promised to reshape CUNY’s image and reform many of the practices that accompanied open admissions. These policies and the succeeding experiments with developmental and community college education that emerged as a result of the open admissions era will be evaluated through historical, statistical, and qualitative methods.
Acknowledgements

This dissertation is dedicated to Anthony G. Picciano. Over the course of many decades, Dr. Picciano has served in a broad range of roles at the City University of New York. He has served under every chancellor since Al Bowker, he was a dean at the College of Staten Island and was a lead person in acquiring land for its new campus, was deputy to President Donna Shalala at Hunter College, was executive director of a Ph.D. program at the Graduate Center, advised countless doctoral students and tells the history of CUNY through a personal narrative that speaks with passion and loyalty to the university he loves. The inspiration for this dissertation comes from a book Dr. Picciano and I authored together in 2017. A year prior, he invited me to join him in constructing a composite history of CUNY since 1961. Over the subsequent twelve months his own history came alive in the many weekends we spent writing and revising chapters. I have enjoyed my time getting to know his story, his lovely family, and sharing in his excitement about the City University of New York.

I am beyond grateful to my committee for their fond support, direct guidance, and constant nurturing. Michelle Fine has been the source of much of the inspiration for this dissertation and has ushered the ideas that are presented within this document from their earliest moments. Her friendship and affection will carry me through my career. I have been fortunate enough to enjoy the company of Julia Wrigley for the last two years whose keen understanding of the CUNY enterprise has shaped the content of this project. Her strong analytical mind and incredibly soft and loving disposition has energized me and provided an incredible foundation for my work. To the three of you, I am eternally grateful.
I would like to also thank Chancellor Matthew Goldstein for his guidance through this process. I am continually reminded of his wise advice to “never make any decisions out of fear.” To former Vice-Chancellor Alexandra Logue, I thank you for a newfound partnership, friendship, and shared understanding of the policies we have grown fond of researching and speaking about to one another. I am most thankful to Vice-Chancellor Vita Rabinowitz and Associate University Provost David Crook for their support for this project. I also appreciate the incredible contributions made by Colin Chellman, Tara Twiste, Thomas Bailey, and Lauren DiMartino, all whom have made this dissertation complete. I am so thankful to Leigh McCallen for her wisdom, guidance, and laughter that have made this project so much richer.

I am immensely grateful to my colleagues at Guttman Community College. I would like to personally thank President Scott Evenbeck for his continued support and friendship. I certainly could not have completed this project without the love and care from Vanita Naidoo, Laura Gambino, Howard Wach, Marissa Schlesinger, Linda Merians, Lori Ungemah, Alia Tyner-Mullings, Andrea Morrell, Daniel Collins, Sebastien Buttet, Karla Smith-Fuller, Rebecca Walker, Tracy Daraviras, Nicola Blake, and Stuart Cochran. I am also incredibly grateful to the friendship and mentorship provided by Joan Lucariello.

Lastly, this dissertation is the product of thirty-two years of love from my parents Chuck and Penny Jordan. They are its spine and its pages. Without their love and support none of this would exist. I also am honored to have been loved by Sean Miller, Sam Pedder-Smith, Jack Owen, Tom Garutto, and Matt Bock. To you gentlemen, I am eternally grateful.
Preface

The inspiration for this dissertation stems, primarily, from two sources. First, I was honored to be asked to join the inaugural faculty of the New Community College at CUNY (later Guttman Community College) in 2012. As a young faculty member, the prospect of opening a new college was exhilarating, particularly since our mission was to redefine community college education and to ensure our students graduated. Our small community has often remarked that we were charged with *building the plane while flying it* and nothing could be closer to the truth. Guttman was and continues to be a grand experiment, one that continues to teach us, prompts us to change directions often, and in many ways one whose full impact still remains a mystery. This project was designed, in part, to reveal a bit more about how Guttman Community College functions in relationship to similar programs across the university. The evidence presented herein is predictive and open to interpretation but argues that there are, perhaps, trends that will offer the institution some evidence on how best to proceed in the coming years as it grows. It has been my wish since the beginning of this project to contribute something substantive to the college that has nurtured me and seen me through this process. I hope that I have.

Second, the historical components of this dissertation extend from *CUNY’s First Fifty Years: Triumphs and Ordeals of a People’s University*, a manuscript I was graciously invited to co-author with my colleague and chair, Anthony Picciano. *CUNY’s First Fifty Years* is described by former Interim Chancellor Christoph Kimmich as a character sketch of some of the most powerful moments of the university’s history. This dissertation explores two of those moments in-depth, providing, in many ways, a month-by-month account of the events leading up to two key policy decisions that greatly altered the course of the university’s historical trajectory.
I wrote in the Afterword of *CUNY's First Fifty Years* that we are not nor will we become *An Institution Adrift* again. This dissertation is a commitment to understanding our university. The contents of this manuscript tell an incredible story of hard-fought policy, educational experimentation, and a generations-long relationship between the great City of New York and its university. I hope this dissertation makes a contribution to our shared history, our love of learning, and to the relationships I have made that dot the pages of this volume.
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Introduction

Developmental education has long been a central mission of the City University of New York. Over decades, developmental education, or remediation, has been the centerpiece of shifting policy initiatives and often the focus of upheaval and conflict. Unlike many other colleges across the country, remediation at CUNY has changed hands a number of times and remains to be one of the greatest challenges facing faculty, administrators, and students at the colleges. Throughout its history, developmental education at CUNY has been both a point of access and a barrier to student success. During the period of open admissions in the early 1970s, developmental skills courses were ubiquitous on the four-year senior college campuses. Three decades later, after declining enrollments and a reputation for low academic standards, remedial education was moved out of the baccalaureate institutions and solely into the community colleges where it remains today. The purpose of this project is to trace the progression of developmental education from the open admissions period into the late 1990s and finally into the present. Each of these three periods represents a significant shift in policy at CUNY and, in turn, signals changes in the university’s demographics and academic mission.

Fabricant & Brier (2016) paint the early days of open admissions as one of extraordinary effort to alter the demographic landscape of the university but also one that was mired in shrinking budgets and an inability to offer high-quality remediation to the vast number of students it had agreed to enroll (p. 87). Up until the landmark decision, CUNY had been experimenting with small-scale open admissions programs, notably the Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK) initiative that provided entry into the senior colleges to underrepresented groups (Picciano & Jordan, 2017, p. 38). The SEEK program was one of the first experiments in offering
underprepared students access to both developmental coursework and college-level classes. Students who “did not meet the academic standards for admission to a senior college were assessed on basic skills (reading, writing, and mathematics) in the summer prior to admission and provided with intensive non-credit remediation in their first year of enrollment” (p. 38). The success of remedial education within the relatively small confines of the SEEK program laid the groundwork for the rapid expansion of developmental coursework when the open admissions decision was hurriedly implemented in 1970. Although a number of studies including one by Lavin & Hyllegard (1996) found that students enrolled under open admissions were largely able to demonstrate academic success, the legacy of the swift implementation of remediation at the CUNY senior colleges set the stage for years of the erosion of academic standards as interest in and funding for open admissions programs fell aside.

The open admissions decision was formed out of a complex series of both academic and political realities that were emblematic of the era in which they were formed. The years leading up to the 1970 implementation were marked by incredible student protest movements, particularly by students of color who demanded greater access to the senior colleges. Over the course of three years’ time, a series of demonstrations and actions pushed for an expansion of CUNY’s mission. From a political and demographic standpoint, this expansion reflected the tenor of the time where the integration of the Black and Hispanic population in New York City was of foremost concern in a range of institutions. From an academic perspective, radical sociopolitical change came at a cost. When the open admissions decision was implemented five years ahead of schedule, programs like remediation were quickly organized and would eventually create a climate where the students open admissions promised to serve were receiving a low-quality education if they made it to graduation at all.
By the 1990s, the golden era of CUNY and its grand open admissions experiment was in tatters. Years of economic downturn and stagnation in New York City, rapid deindustrialization, and declining political and fiscal support for public higher education had left CUNY with degrading campuses and a plummeting national reputation. Low graduation rates coupled with ongoing academic scandals forced the university’s Board of Trustees to reevaluate CUNY’s mission and policies. On the heels of the controversial administration of Chancellor W. Ann Reynolds, the Board promised to rebrand CUNY’s image and hire a new leader who could implement the policy recommendations found in the historic and damaging report *An Institution Adrift*, an assessment of CUNY’s academic and operational policies. Just before the dawn of the 21st century, former Baruch College president Matthew Goldstein was appointed Chancellor of the City University of New York. During his early tenure, Chancellor Goldstein promised to reestablish the senior colleges as national competitors by removing remedial education from the curricula. This historic shift in policy moved developmental education to the community colleges where students who did not demonstrate basic skills proficiency were required to enroll before they could transfer to a four-year institution. Many CUNY faculty believed this to be in direct contradiction to CUNY’s mission and predicted the decision would lead to a rapid decline in senior college enrollment. Although the worst-case scenarios never materialized, the demographics of the university shifted over time. Ultimately, the community colleges and their developmental skills programs would enroll high percentages of Black and Hispanic students, many of whom would have enrolled in one of the senior colleges in the open admissions era. This decision represented a *contraction* of the university’s mission for many. The removal of remediation from the senior colleges did increase the national reputation of many of these institutions. However, the barriers faced by
students, particularly students of color, increased with many never realizing their ambitious goal of earning a four-year degree.

When the Great Recession swept the country in 2007, the City University of New York responded to its low community college graduation rates. With some campuses only graduating 5% of their students in three years, federal and state policy attention was trained on how to challenge years of low expectations and high dropout rates. For CUNY faculty and administrators, developmental skills programs were an obvious cause of dropout for many community college students. During this time, a number of experimental programs were launched to increase community college graduation rates and, in some cases, to restructure developmental skills requirements at the same time. The Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) initiative provided students with structural supports that attempted to reduce socioeconomic and scheduling barriers that stood in the way of completion. Additionally, CUNY Start was organized to provide remedial students with a low-cost, intensive, pre-college program designed to assist them in successfully passing the placement exams before entering college. Stella and Charles Guttman Community College was opened in 2012 after five years of planning and promised to increase the rate at which community college students graduated by providing a structured pathway to degree completion. These experiments have ushered in a new age of university policy and are focused on the nuances of how students learn best in order to give them an increased opportunity to be successful.

The subsequent chapters will evaluate these three periods of CUNY’s rich history. The first two chapters describe the eras of expansion and contraction and the third chapter advances a study analyzing the nuances of remediation within the community college context. The manuscript concludes with policy recommendations offered to the university based on the evidence discussed in this study.
Research Questions & Methods

Research Questions

1. How has developmental education policy at the City University of New York changed since the period of open admissions in the late 1960s?

2. How do two community college programs reflect changes in developmental education as a result of policy initiatives focused on efficiency and completion?

Historical Analysis

In lieu of a traditional literature review, the first two chapters of this manuscript present an historical analysis of two key time periods in the history of the City University of New York. The first period ranges from 1967-1970 and is described via a series of stories leading up to the groundbreaking open admissions decision. The analysis for this chapter is drawn from archival material that has been preserved from this period. The data are aggregated from CUNY campus newspapers like CCNY’s The Campus that have been preserved digitally. Other materials are taken from archival collections in the University libraries, specifically from a range of materials available from Queens College. Additionally, some source material was included from the personal records of Audre Lorde at Harvard University. Information for the second chapter focuses on the period leading up to the withdrawal of remedial programs from the senior colleges in 2000, with information primarily drawn from major news outlets such as the New York Times. Additional material is sourced from internal CUNY documents including minutes from the Board of Trustees, Master Plans, and a range of other policy proceedings.

Quantitative Analysis
The quantitative component of this study focuses on a comparative analysis of two experimental community college programs that emerged as a result of shifting policies in developmental education. The data for this study were provided by the CUNY Office of Institutional Research. The dataset includes 275,993 student records from the community and senior colleges of the City University of New York. Student records are available from 2010-2016. The data are organized by student ID record number in 2,242 variables. Variables cover a range of student information including academic, financial, high school, and demographic identifiers. The full dataset was incorporated into this study in order to provide specific contextual information regarding trends in enrollment, academics, and financial aid since the recession period began. Subsequently, a subset was created in order to perform an analysis on CUNY’s ASAP program and Stella and Charles Guttman Community College. A rationale will be given later in this manuscript regarding the choice of these two programs. In order to make an appropriate comparison, student records were selected from each program using the following parameters: 1) 2012-2013 freshman cohort, 2) only students requiring two or fewer subjects of remediation, 3) enrolled in the ASAP program at BMCC or at Guttman Community College. Once these parameters were applied, the subset included N=351, with 146 students from BMCC ASAP and 205 students from Guttman Community College.

Basic descriptive statistics were used to provide a basic picture of the two programs. In order to understand how a range of student demographic, academic, financial factors influence credit accumulation, GPA, first-year retention, and two-year graduation, multiple regression analysis was conducted within and across institutions. First, ordinary least squares (OLS) regression was utilized to predict credit accumulation and GPA within each institution to understand how a range of covariates influence these markers of academic progress. Additionally, binary logistic
regression models were evaluated to understand the probability of students being retained after the first year of college and graduating within two years using the same set of covariates as were used in the OLS models. OLS and logistic models were generated for each institution.

To compare the ASAP model with the Guttman Community College model, several sets of regression techniques were used to understand the relative impact of Guttman in relation to ASAP. OLS models were generated to determine the impact of a student being enrolled at Guttman Community College on credit accumulation and GPA. Binary logistic regression was performed to determine whether Guttman students were more likely to be retained after the first year and graduate within two years than their peers in the ASAP program. Two models were generated for each dependent variable, a main effects and interaction effects model. The purpose of including an interaction effects model was to understand the relationship between the covariates and the treatment which was, in this case, Guttman Community College. In order to draw a more robust comparison, propensity-score matching techniques were used to generate an average treatment effect (ATE) that allowed for an analysis focused on causal inference rather than simple prediction. Rationale for including a set of propensity-score models will be discussed later in this study.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative component of this study was drawn from a focus group comprised of students from the ASAP program at BMCC and Guttman Community College. Four students agreed to participate in the study, two from each program. The focus group was held at Guttman Community College and offered students an opportunity to engage in a one-hour conversation with one another in a discussion about their experiences at Guttman or in the ASAP program. The unique setting of a focus group also permitted participants time to verbally reflect on the similarities and
differences between the two programs. The focus group opened with time for each student to reflect on his or her experience in the program. After this round was completed, students were prompted to dialogue with one another about several key themes that arose throughout each of their stories. An analysis of these themes will be discussed later in this manuscript.

Limitations of Study

There are several areas in which this study could be strengthened or altered in order to generate more robust results. A significant critique of the statistical analysis described in this manuscript is that the data are not representative of a randomized controlled trial and are strictly observational. To best compare the ASAP and Guttman models, students would be sorted randomly into either program. However, because institutional policy would, under no circumstances, allow for this to occur, specific methodologies are used to create similar conditions for analysis as would be available in an RCT. An additional limitation of this study relates to the choice of comparison groups. The BMCC ASAP program exists within an already established institution, a college that is by every measure, traditional. As a program within a college, ASAP can only influence certain aspects of the student experience where others are left to the academic and bureaucratic processes already in place. Conversely, Guttman Community College is a standalone institution that has only been in operation for five years and was designed to fulfill a specific mission. Its infrastructure is vastly different than that of a traditional community college. Most notably, Guttman does not have any academic departments nor does it have a traditional system of college governance. Comparing these two programs is useful to understand how similar structural components impact the student experience in dissimilar institutions but is complicated by the differences inherent to each college. A more appropriate comparison group will be Guttman Community College and Bronx Community College which is presently undergoing an overhaul to
become the first entirely ASAP-based institution at CUNY. Future studies will permit this comparison.

The dataset provided by the CUNY Office of Institutional Research is remarkably comprehensive and has allowed for a nuanced analysis. However, because of the gap in the time data are reported from the colleges and when they are integrated into the larger dataset, extensive study of graduation and transfer rates as well as student success upon transfer were unavailable for this study. Future studies will allow for a longitudinal analysis of these key variables.
The Historic Restructuring of the City University of New York:
The Years Leading to Open Admissions (1967-1970)

1967-1968 Academic Year

Enrollment

In the fall 1967, the university enrolled 152,776 students in all programs. The total enrollment for the university was underscored by increases in the number of full-time freshmen at both the senior and community colleges.

Table 1.1: Senior College Enrollment Matriculated v. Non-Matriculated 1966 & 1967

Source: [http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)
The 1967 year saw an increase in matriculated students at the senior colleges partly due to the opening of two new campuses: Richmond College on Staten Island and York College in Queens. The senior colleges were largely populated by matriculated, degree-seeking students who were not required to pay tuition. Non-matriculated students predominately enrolled in evening session courses that mandated tuition be paid by credit hour dependent upon the college at which the student was enrolled. At the time, the Baruch College of Business was still a function of the City College of New York and the soon-to-be Lehman College remained Hunter College in the Bronx. Across the campuses, 2,667 students were enrolled in programs for the disadvantaged, including the SEEK program. SEEK was divided between students who were considered “pre-baccalaureate” and were enrolled in the daytime, matriculated program and students who were non-matriculated and considered part of the evening program. City College and Queens College were by far the largest participants in the SEEK program and would eventually become central sites of conflict regarding open admissions standards for the university-at-large. Because SEEK

Table 1.2: Community College Enrollment Matriculated v. Non-Matriculated 1966 & 1967

Source: [http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)
was a program designed to increase the number of Black and Puerto Rican students who earned bachelor’s degrees, enrollment at the community colleges were small.

**Table 1.3: Enrollment in the SEEK Program Fall 1967**

![Graph showing enrollment in the SEEK Program Fall 1967](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)

Source: [http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)

However, the SEEK program provided access to four-year education to a small fraction of the overall student body at CUNY. In 1967, 81% of the total university student population was White whereas 10% were black and 3% were Puerto Rican (City University of New York, 1967, p. 2). Although SEEK students were predominately enrolled at City and Queens, there were stark few Black and Puerto Rican students at the senior colleges during this academic year. Black and Puerto Rican student held a greater majority in the evening programs where they retained non-matriculated status and were forced to pay by-credit tuition.
Table 1.4: Racial Composition of the University Fall 1967

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matriculated</th>
<th>Non-Matriculated</th>
<th>Community College</th>
<th>Senior College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>90.00%</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
<td>70.00%</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)

Of the total number of Black and Puerto Rican students, 23% and 15% respectively graduated from a public high school in New York City. Admissions standards for entry into the senior college had reached a height of close to an 85 high school average in 1967 and the University acknowledged that only 5.3% of Black and Puerto Rican students who enrolled that year met the requirements necessary for baccalaureate admissions (p. 9). Prior to the 1967 academic year, there had been no previous analysis of the racial and ethnic makeup of the university (p. 10).
Table 1.5: Racial Makeup of Matriculated Students by College 1967

![Bar Chart: Racial Makeup of Matriculated Students by College 1967](image)

Source: [http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)

*Negro is used as a student descriptor until the 1970s.

Table 1.6: Racial Makeup of Non-Matriculated Students by College 1967

![Bar Chart: Racial Makeup of Non-Matriculated Students by College 1967](image)

Source: [http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)
Table 1.7: Racial Makeup of the University by College 1967

The senior colleges retained a predominately White student population during the late 1960s. At the community colleges, however, the representation of Black students who enrolled as non-matriculants was significant. At the time, a layered admissions process adversely impacted students of color who desired to attend the senior colleges as tuition-free, matriculated students. For those students who did not meet the steep admissions standards for entry into one of the four-year institutions, the community college offered a gateway into the University. However, admission standards, as will later be discussed, for the community college matriculated program also required that students demonstrate success in a range of high school academic courses from math to foreign language. If these standards were not met upon entry, students could enroll into the non-matriculated programs in order to earn enough credits to enroll in the daytime programs at one of the community colleges. For many, this step represented the first challenge to gaining admission to a baccalaureate education. Once students completed enough credits to earn
matriculated status at a community college, they could apply their degree from one of the two-year institutions to automatically enroll into a senior college of their choice (p. 5). However, the demographics of the matriculated programs at the senior colleges indicate that there was stark little transfer of students between non-matriculated programs at the community colleges and the four-year institutions. Heightened admissions standards proved to be an obstacle for students of color even though there was clear interest in higher education for a growing number of Black students particularly. As the academic year 1967-1968 progressed, the intention of Black students in New York City to pursue advanced education would become the center of a political and academic debate across the campuses as the University unknowingly prepared itself for the grand experiment of open admissions.

The Budget

On February 1, 1967, the budget requests for the State and City of New York were forwarded to the legislature in Albany. Governor Nelson Rockefeller’s budget requested $4.82 billion for the state and Mayor John Lindsay’s topped out at just over $1 billion (Butler, 1967, p. 14). At CUNY, Chancellor Albert Bowker was looking ahead to 1975, a time he believed that all high school graduates from New York City public high schools could attend a CUNY college of their choice free of charge (New York Times, 1967, p. 29). In 1966, CUNY’s operating budget approached $135 million (p. 29). Bowker had announced the previous spring that because of “years of inadequate financial support and makeshift arrangements,” the “university would have to cut back admissions” in 1967 “unless it received substantial financial aid” from both the city and state (p. 29). The 1967-1968 budget battle between Bowker, the City, and the State highlighted the tensions between the three constituencies regarding expansion, free tuition, and institutional autonomy,
particularly from the State University system. Initially, budget negotiations focused on the public fallout between City Controller Mario Procaccino and Mayor John Lindsay. Procaccino argued that Lindsay’s capital budget “contained $162-million in funds unused from previous capital budgets” (Bennett, 1967, p. 15). Procaccino argued that the reallocation of capital funds represented “poor budgeting” (p. 15) within a system that already provided for the carryover of capital funds from the previous year. Although Lindsay hoped to use the capital expense carryover expenditures to signal that his budget was balanced, Procaccino charged that “projects totaling $148.9-million were erroneously carried in the capital budget, instead of the expense budget, because they were to be financed wholly or largely with other-than-city funds” (p. 15). Among these items was $64.5 million in “City University construction funds, largely reimbursable by the state” (p. 15). Procaccino’s condemnation of Lindsay’s handling of the budget came at the same time that the mayor proposed to the state legislature to incorporate CUNY as an autonomous institution of the State University of New York system (Offen, 1967, p. 1). Through his legislative initiative, Lindsay hoped to shift the 50% share the city was responsible for in annual expenditures for CUNY over to the state (p. 1). There were signals at the time that since along with the University’s rapid expansion would also come a significant increase in financial support by the City of New York. By relieving the City of obligation to fund the University under the free-tuition policy established in years prior, Lindsay would effectively be leaving the battle for free tuition to state politicians. Although matriculated students at CUNY were not obliged to pay tuition, their counterparts at SUNY paid $400 per year (p. 1). However, Lindsay faced enormous opposition to the proposal that included Chairman of the Board of Higher Education Porter Chandler, University Chancellor Albert Bowker, and former New York City Mayor Robert Wagner (Soltis, 1967, p. 1). And although the proposal never passed, its legacy would resurface at many moments over the
course of CUNY’s history as budget battles between the state and the city at times jeopardized CUNY’s autonomy as an individual university.

The budget battle leading up to the 1967-1968 academic year also threatened to upend the SEEK program. The previous year, SEEK had been allocated $1 million in state funding to support the program’s expansion. However, the 1967 budget did not include any funding at all for SEEK (Soltis, 1967, p. 1). In a report to the Joint Legislative Committee on Higher Education, Chancellor Bowker remarked that “SEEK had expected to double its enrollment of 1400 students and thus needed an allocation of $4 million” (p. 1). President Buell Gallagher of City College and a group of SEEK students also voiced their opposition to the governor’s decision. Governor Rockefeller negotiated with Mayor Lindsay and determined that the State of New York would match any funds allocated by the City for the SEEK program (Soltis, 1967, p. 2). By May, however, the budget crisis had reached a boiling point. Even though Rockefeller had promised to match funding for the SEEK program and the state legislature avoided the merger of the SUNY and CUNY systems, Mayor Lindsay proved to be CUNY’s next formidable antagonist.

Just before the academic year ended, Mayor Lindsay presented an operating budget to the finance committee of the City Council and the Board of Estimate. For the upcoming year, Lindsay “set a $144.1 million figure for the multi-campus university, $9.8 million less than the university sought” (Farber, 1967, p. 40). Panic quickly spread to the campuses. At City College, President Gallagher reported to his students and faculty that “the College will not open its doors in September” (Levinson, 1967, p. 1) if Mayor Lindsay’s budget is approved. The President of Queens College Joseph MacMurray also “warned that the cuts might force curtailment of classes” across the entire
system, not just at City College (Farber, 1967, p. 40). Chancellor Bowker lobbied the City Council to restore funding to CUNY arguing that the Mayor’s insistence that the budget contained an additional $28 million was simply a political ploy to suggest that additional funding was available over the previous year when, in fact, the budget was a drastic reduction given the size the University had grown to (p. 40). Lindsay, however, countered Bowker’s lobbying efforts by giving the Chancellor access to a lump sum budget rather than a line-item budget where expenses had to be approved by local agencies before they could be moved from one entity to the other (p. 40). With a lump sum budget, Bowker and his presidents could easily move resources from one unit to another without legislative interference. And although Chancellor Bowker found comfort in Lindsay’s modest proposal, Chairman of the Board of Higher Education Porter Chandler condemned the mayor’s negotiations as unsound and “unworkable” (p. 40). Chairman Chandler and President Gallagher were less amiable to Lindsay’s compromise than was Chancellor Bowker.

At the conclusion of the 1966-1967 academic year, President Gallagher acknowledged the political rationale for Lindsay’s proposal to significantly reduce CUNY’s budget. He “disclosed that the city’s Budget Director Frederick O.R. Hayes had suggested in a letter [on] April 16 that the University could increase its revenues by 9.8 million dollars if it charged fees” (Ackerman, 1967, p. 1). Moreover, Gallagher drew a stark parallel between the sum described in the letter and the amount Lindsay cut from the budget. With both totals equaling $9.8 million, Gallagher suggested that unless Lindsay walked back his proposal to make CUNY a revenue stream, it was highly probable that the 1967-1968 freshman class would have to be substantially scaled back in size and students would have to be moved to other colleges that could support additional enrollment (p. 1). Chancellor Bowker took a far more conciliatory tone to Lindsay’s proposal than did President
Gallagher. Gallagher challenged Lindsay and reminded the mayor that even though the City was under particularly challenging economic constraints, the “required money could still be obtained from the Mayor’s special contingency fund” (p. 1) if Lindsay was committed to funding CUNY without the imposition of tuition. Moreover, Gallagher publicly chastised the mayor for his treatment of Board Chairman Porter Chandler in the prior week’s budget hearings stating that “the dedicated arrogant man called the Mayor of New York City needs to know that along with arrogance there must be compassion” (p. 4). Gallagher’s full-fledged support of City College and also of the university led to a restoration of $4.8 million of the funds cut by Mayor Lindsay that spring (The Campus, 1967, p. 2). Although tensions had eased across the campuses as the 1967-1968 academic year began, the issue of free tuition for CUNY students was also discussed in another political arena where many hoped to make college education a universal right for all New York State residents regardless of their ability to pay, race, or where they resided. The Constitutional Convention of 1967 had opened the previous spring and offered a glimpse into what would eventually become a central focus in the battle for open admission.

**The Constitutional Convention of 1967**

In the first issue of the 1967 academic year, City College’s student newspaper, The Campus, reported that New York State’s five-month-old Constitutional Convention passed a resolution that, if implemented, would require the colleges of the State University and the City University of New York to offer tuition-free education for undergraduate students (Soltis, 1967, p. 2). In the column next to this highly-praised article was a short piece reminding the campus community that the previous spring semester concluded with President Buell Gallagher’s warning that CCNY “might have to ‘close its doors’…or reduce the size of the freshman class after the city had cut $9.4 million
from the City University’s allocation” (The Campus, 1967, p. 2). After only six years as a unified university system, CUNY’s identity was already being shaped by the contradictory demands of access and who would take ownership of the financial responsibility of providing education to the people of the City of New York. Prior to becoming a university system, the four-year colleges that represented the newly developed City University offered free tuition to students enrolled in daytime programs and charged tuition, then called “fees” to those students who attended school at night. In fact, in 1957 “nearly 36,000 attended Hunter, Brooklyn, Queens, and City Colleges for free, but another 24,000 paid tuition of up to $300 a year” (The City University of New York, 2011). The 20th century reality for the senior colleges, even prior to their union under the seal of the City University of New York, was that tuition provided a substantial share of college revenues, bringing in close to $7.74 million per year by the late 1950s (The City University of New York, 2011). By the end of September 1967, the possibility of full elimination of tuition for all undergraduate students in both the State and City University systems seemed to inch closer to passage by the full New York State Constitutional Convention.

Shortly after the Constitutional Convention of 1967 opened on April 4, the New York State Board of Regents that governs education for the state urged the convention to ensure that “opportunities for all students beyond high school be equal, ‘regardless of age, race, color, creed, economic or social status, or place of residence’ in the state” (The New York Times, 1967, p. 38). Along with an insistence that both the State and City Universities of New York provide access and opportunity for a broader spectrum of the population, SUNY Chancellor Samuel Gould argued that SUNY and CUNY be given full managerial autonomy under the provisions of the forthcoming revised constitution. Moreover, as rumors flew in prior years that the State University would assume
responsibility for the City University of New York, those were dispelled in Mayor John Lindsay’s proposal that the state government support CUNY financially rather than assume responsibility for its governance and management (The New York Times, 1967, p. 35). At the same time that the public universities in New York State sought an increase in influence over their own institutions, the private colleges pushed back in a statement to the Constitutional Convention that recommended that the role of the Board of Regents be preserved as the central governing body over all levels of education. The concern expressed by the private colleges largely stemmed from fears regarding tuition. While SUNY and CUNY, whose combined enrollments in 1967 reached 328,000, offered higher education for a nominal fee, private colleges in the state were forced to support their institutions with tuition revenues which were raised each year. Leadership at the private colleges feared that the growing power of the State University system would ultimately divert public funds and tuition-paying students away from their campuses if the powers of the Board of Regents were limited and free tuition was enforced as rule of law in the state (Schanberg, 1967, p. 36). Along with the proposal for a statement of autonomy in the constitution, the convention was rocked by a radical proposition from Brooklyn native and Democratic Speaker of the Assembly, Anthony J. Travia, that would “guarantee a free college education for all residents [of New York State] who wanted it” (The New York Times, 1967, p. 1). Republican Governor Nelson Rockefeller opposed the measure taken up by the convention claiming that an elimination of tuition at New York State campuses would “cripple the university’s expansion” (Buder, 1967, p. 27). Rockefeller’s opposition to the shift in fiscal policy was prominent in a chorus of other esteemed lawmakers and educators. State Controller Arthur Levitt, a Democrat, supported the measure in principle but raised questions regarding the implications of making free tuition part of a fixed state ratified constitution (p. 27). SUNY Chancellor Samuel Gould voiced his concern on whether capital
projects and plans for expansion would continue if tuition revenue suddenly disappeared while his counterpart at CUNY Albert Bowker praised the proposal but held back strong support until the details of the provisions were written (p. 27). As debate continued regarding the implications of the tuition proposal, the nuances of what was meant by free higher education actually meant. By mid-August 1967, SUNY Chancellor Gould questioned whether the proposal “meant ‘free education’ or ‘free tuition’” (Buder, 1967, p. 159) where free education might imply that the state would offer scholarships to supplement the burden of tuition for those who were unable to pay (p. 159). Though the City University of New York did not charge tuition for its full-time daytime students, fees were collected from non-matriculant night students, many of whom represented low-income students “who hoped that one day their grade point average would permit transfer to the more prestigious-and free-day schools” (The City University of New York, 2011). To cover additional expenses, CUNY entered into contract with the state that allowed it to pay “off its bonds by means of special city and state grants” (Buder, 1967, p. 159), a possibility that could have assuaged some of the concerns of Chancellor Gould regarding the loss of tuition revenue if the state agreed to assume the cost of higher education.

By the end of August, the Republican countermeasure to the tuition proposal focused its attention on the perceived ineffectiveness of the City University of New York to provide higher education to a larger swath of the local population and instead raised admissions standards to the free daytime program to limit costs. Challenges included a claim that the “city’s goal of providing for 40,000 students by 1960, was not met until 1964” (The New York Times, 1967, p. 42) resulting in an enormous strain on campus physical plants. Republicans argued that rather than providing open access for New York City high school students, CUNY created an illusion of opportunity and cut
costs by raising standards and neglecting infrastructure. In turn, the conservative minority in the convention opposed the tuition measure claiming that its ratification would result in costs to the state of close to $1.6 billion in both baseline tuition coverage and capital expenses to support rapid expansion (The New York Times, 1967, p. 42). The 1967 CUNY Data Book on enrollment and degrees states that “students who wish to pursue collegiate study but who have not received adequate high school preparation may be admitted as non-matriculants” (CUNY Office of Institutional Research, 1967, p. 4). The description goes on to say that “they pay a modest tuition of approximately $54 per course in the senior colleges, and $45 per course in the community colleges” (p. 4).

The Republican challenge to Travia’s tuition-free plan was not without merit. Though a sweeping majority of White students comprised both matriculated and non-matriculated components of the university system, far fewer Black students were eligible to enroll in the tuition-free, full-time programs. The demographic makeup of the university was constructed by a substantial increase in admissions standards between 1950 and 1967. In 1950, the average high school mean score for admission to a CUNY senior college was 78 but by 1967 it had raised to close to 85 (The New York Times, 1967, p. 42). CUNY reported that low enrollment of full-time, matriculated students of color across the institution could be explained by the notion that “minority group students are more likely either to make choices, or to have choices made for them, which significantly decrease the probability that they will be able to meet regular admissions requirements for a collegiate program” (CUNY Office of Institutional Research, 1967, p. 6). The university hypothesized that because minority students were more likely to choose a vocational high school than were their White peers, they were less likely to take courses that would prepare them to compete for entry
into a CUNY college. Moreover, Black and Puerto Rican students were far less likely to finish four years of high school and carry a diploma required for admission (p. 7). In 1967, only 3.7% of Black and 1.6% of Puerto Rican high school students earned academic diplomas (p. 7). Moreover, “the community colleges enroll a higher population of Negro and Puerto Rican students than do senior colleges because many of their programs require less high school preparation. For the same reason, non-matriculants include significantly higher proportions of Negro and Puerto Rican students than do matriculants” (p. 9). The publicity of CUNY’s free tuition policy came with limitations. Financial incentives were afforded primarily to White students who had completed rigorous high school programs and were able to meet the admissions standards to get into a CUNY four-year college. Conversely, those students who were least prepared, of color, and were from low-income neighborhoods were charged fees and were not permitted to enroll in a degree-seeking program.

Students enrolled in fee-based evening courses were a significant source of revenue for supporting capital projects related to expansion. Opponents of the constitutional provision’s passage linked the failure of the State Housing Finance Authority on September 7, 1967 to sell $46 million in construction funds for its colleges to the free tuition movement “because in the past construction borrowings had been repaid by tuition charges” (Elson, 1967, p. 2). A few days later, New York State “negotiated a loan of almost $27 million” to offset the losses. Construction projects at campuses across the state were required to pay off close to $27 million in September prompting the State Housing Finance Agency to secure that amount plus an additional $20 million “through the sale of a new issue of securities by the standard procedure of sealed bids” (Mooney, 1967, p. 49). Travia’s tuition-free provision forced financial centers to remain silent in the bidding process
for fear that the elimination of fee-based revenue “had undercut the agency’s ability to repay what it borrows” (p. 49). However, convention Democrats were unwilling to remove the provision so the state instead “cut back the amount of money it sought, and the banks agreed to provide it” (p. 49).

By the middle of September 1967, the Travia tuition proposal was in peril. With the end of the Constitutional Convention only a few days away, ten Democrats joined Republican ranks in opposition to the language of proposal. The ten Democrats proposed significant alterations to the intent of the provision. Though they had voted down the party line in the first vote, convention Democrats wavered on the required second vote for the provision to be considered passed and ready to be reviewed by the electorate in the state (Schanberg, 1967, p. 50). The proposed amendment suggested that “free” higher education be changed to a clause stating that the legislature “shall…provide for a system of higher education including both public and non-public institutions as to ensure that no qualified citizen shall be denied the benefits of the same” (p. 50). This revision attempted to quell anxiety across the aisle regarding the state’s commitment to providing a free college education to all residents regardless of socioeconomic status. The amended language made room for the legislature to determine how financial qualification for free tuition would be evaluated so that wealthy students who could afford to pay tuition would be required to do so (p. 50).

When the Constitutional Convention closed on September 26, 1967, the radical bill introduced by Anthony Travia had been severely scaled back. Rather than providing free public education for all New York State residents, the proposal was reworded entirely by both Republicans and
Democrats to instead give “permission for the Legislature to expand higher education system-public and private-with free tuition, grants, fellowships, and scholarships” (The New York Times, 1967, p. 22). At City College, the student newspaper expressed concern over the shift in policy that suggested the legislature would commit to providing tax levy aid to both public and private colleges, a last-minute addition that curtailed the power of the public education system to expand. City College reports argued that CUNY’s efforts to expand and provide free education to all New York City residents was threatened by “the diversion of [state] funds to private schools” (Ackerman, 1967, p. 2) where revenues were unneeded. Ultimately, the entire proposed constitution was rejected by the voters in every county in New York State, allowing none of the proposed changes to take the force of law. However, the convention and Travia’s proposal for free college education laid the necessary groundwork for the forthcoming period of intense activism on the campuses of the City University of New York where admissions standards and the prospect of free tuition would be central to the debates on Civil Rights sweeping the nation’s colleges and universities.

**War Near, War Far: The Politics of a University in Upheaval**

**Changes Come to City College.** At City College, the politics of enrollment growth merged with the Anti-War and Free Speech movements that were crisscrossing the CUNY campuses. At the conclusion of the 1966-1967 academic year, CCNY President Buell Gallagher contracted with local architects and construction agencies to begin plans for building temporary structures on campus to support the rapid growth in enrollment. Plans had been in place for construction to begin over the summer for an academic year that promised to be far larger with regard to enrollment numbers than the one prior. City College’s total student population increased by 1,190
students from the spring 1967 semester to the following fall term (CUNY Office of Institutional Research, 1967, p. 3). Approaching 30,000 students, the Harlem campus was quickly running out of physical space in which to hold classes and for faculty offices. Moreover, the campus was not only increasing in the number of baccalaureate admissions, programs like SEEK designed to admit a larger number of Black and Latino students would more than triple in three semester’s time ballooning from 479 students in Fall 1967 to over 1,500 in fall 1969 (CUNY Office of Institutional Research, 1969, p. 4). For the students at City College, open access would be the center of a series of protest movements, occupations, and political conflicts in the years leading up to 1970. However, competing priorities of access and preservation dominated campus dialogue early in 1967. At the conclusion of the spring 1967 semester, the Student Government and CCNY’s administration had reached an agreement on how construction of temporary facilities on the campus would proceed over the summer. By September, however, President Gallagher notified students and faculty that construction on what would colloquially be titled Site Six had been halted because “‘all bids for one phase of the construction were too high’ and since ‘June 18 there has been no resolution of how to build structures in this situation’” (Soltis, 1967, p. 2). The complications surrounding the delay were further agitated because, according to Gallagher, there was little clarity on who owned the land on which the college sits making it difficult to turn over full decision-making authority to the New York State Dormitory authority who was responsible for financing the construction project (p. 2). As plans stalled for the rapid placement of temporary “huts” to ease the strain on CCNY’s physical plant, Gallagher and members of the Student Government were organizing preliminary meetings to discuss the implementation of the campuses Master Plan that called for a North Campus construction project whose design would be influenced by all members of the campus community (Soltis, 1967, p. 1). However, even as students felt the
impact of crowding caused by swelling enrollments and plans for an expanded campus excited student leaders, the City College community was thrown into chaos when construction on temporary structures began in late September 1967.

When construction finally got underway, thirty students organized to block efforts to cut down trees in preparation for the temporary huts. In response to the beginning of the construction efforts on the CCNY campus, students “blocked the front entrance to the Administration building…with a 25-foot tree” (Soltis, 1967, p. 1). President Gallagher and Student Government President Joe Korn expressed outrage at the students’ coordinated effort to delay the construction efforts. Gallagher threatened disciplinary action if destruction of the proposed building sites continued and Korn reprimanded the protesters for their lack of consideration for the Student Government’s involvement with an agreement to the construction on the plot of land (p. 4). However, neither Gallagher or Korn were able to put a stop to the demonstrations. A few days later, the crowd protesting Site Six grew to over two hundred students. As the size of the demonstration grew throughout the day, several students climbed the trees that were about to be cut down, insisting that President Gallagher name a new space for the temporary facilities. It was clear through chants like “What about Gallagher’s lawn?” referring to a request by the protesters to move the huts to a space in front of the President’s home on campus, that the demonstrations were an attempt to voice: 1) their own power in campus decision-making, 2) frustration and anger with the expansion of the campus (Dobkin & Ackerman, 1967, p. 1). Ultimately, Gallagher shifted responsibility to the Board of Higher Education, and in a meeting with students the night of the protests, explained that the contracts for the construction of Site Six had already been signed and could not be reversed and noted that continued disruption of the project would result in the campus losing out on any
increase in physical space (p. 5). At the end of the first day of protests, seven students were suspended and nine were arrested, including three who remained stationed in the trees so that construction crews could not cut them down (p. 1).

Over the weeks that followed, the campus debated whether President Gallagher concealed the total number of temporary structures that needed to be built from Student Government officials who served on the Shadow Cabinet, a student auxiliary to the President’s cabinet, the previous year and signed off on the short-term expansion plan. However, SG President Joe Korn and his administration determined that the proposal issued to the Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet the year prior represented an agreed upon plan for the construction of temporary facilities. After the demonstration and eventual suspension of students, however, President Gallagher was influenced by the pressure of the students who supported scrapping the entire construction project (Ackerman, 1967, p. 1). Gallagher offered a two–week suspension of all construction activities on campus, a decision the Student Government described as a violation of the agreement reached among campus constituencies the previous spring. Joe Korn spoke out against Gallagher’s decision, accusing him of siding with a small minority of students rather than supporting the democratic process that involved students, faculty, and administrators. Korn decided that members of the Student Government would step down from the Shadow Cabinet in protest of the two-week moratorium on construction. Discord between the two factions of students, the arrest and suspension of students, and the President Gallagher’s acquiescence to the demonstrators caused a disturbance in the faculty as well. Much like the student body, the faculty were split in terms of how they thought the controversy was handled. Chairman of the English Department, Professor Edmond Volpe, supported Gallagher stating that “we have to educate the students and we don’t have room to do
it” (DiFalco, 1967, p. 2) but noted that Gallagher was backed into a corner by student protesters and felt that the only way to calm the situation was to suspend the project (p. 2). Conversely, though, other members of the faculty believed that demonstration represented an attack on limited funding rather than the construction project while others took a more activist stance and commented on the horrific occurrence of having students arrested on campus (p. 2). However, the College’s Onyx Society argued that the demonstration was a response to the growing number of Black and Puerto Rican students on campus by White students who saw the building project as a threat to the status quo campus culture.

The all-Black Onyx Society argued that the demonstration of the Site Six construction area was largely a reaction to racial integration. The society “accused the anti-hut demonstrators of ‘denying adequate facilities to students of the College’s SEEK program-95 percent of whom are Black or Puerto Rican’” (Dobkin, 1967, p. 2). The SEEK program was slated to move into Mott Hall, part of which was supposed to be vacated and moved to one of the temporary spaces by the fall semester. Though the SEEK population at CCNY was still small in 1967, it was preparing a massive expansion that would be realized in the coming two years. The Onyx Society also reminded the campus community that in order for the campus to expand “over four hundred Black and Puerto Rican families, residing behind Klapper Hall are being forced to relocate” (p. 2). Even though the expansion project would feasibly allow for additional students of color to enroll at City College through the SEEK program, Black students were careful to acknowledge the costs to the local community. Between 1960-1970, the racial demography of Harlem was changing rapidly. Historically White neighborhoods west of City College between Amsterdam Avenue and the Hudson River underwent a process of racial integration throughout the decade. Many Harlem
strongholds that comprised a 99% Black population retained their demographic makeup during the 1960s. However, many White neighborhoods became more heterogeneous as Black residents moved into property west of Amsterdam Avenue (1970 Census). Students insisted that the focus on the preservation of campus greenery was a form of “subtle racism” and alleged that students of color were not considered in the allegations drawn up by student protesters and presented to the administration. One of the leaders of the demonstration responded saying “the fact that we haven’t talked about the issue of relocating the people of Harlem doesn’t mean that we haven’t concerned ourselves with it” (p. 2). The temporary construction project at City College signaled that there were fractures between student groups and among the faculty and administration as the college prepared for the peak of its growth project in the years to come. As the mission of the institution changed in the late 1960s, it also was forced to address its many blind spots. Demonstrations that focused on the preservation of the campus environment intentionally or unintentionally silenced and neglected the expansion of the physical plant in support of a growing population of students of color. Moreover, as the college grew, it spread into the community of Harlem, displacing families as it sought to increase access for those who lived there. The clash between the Onyx Society and the student protesters grew over the subsequent weeks. As City College administrators, in particular Dean Sherburne Barber, notified the seven suspended students that a committee of their peers and professors determined that their punishment be an indefinite suspension with the possibility of re-admittance upon submission of an essay explaining their crimes, the campus shifted focus back to the plans for the temporary structures (Dobkin, 1967, p. 1).
President Gallagher held an open hearing days before the two-week moratorium on construction was to expire. Central to the discussion among students was an exchange between protesters and members of the Onyx Society. While architecture students presented nine alternative proposals for the Site Six construction project, Onyx Society President Edwin Fabre argued that while there were clear issues regarding construction in the local neighborhood, the continuation of the Site Six project was vital to the growth and support of the Black and Puerto Rican students who were being admitted through the SEEK program (Ackerman, 1967, p. 1). Fabre stated that while the Onyx Society did not see the “present construction as adequate” he believed that “any delay in construction…will bring further undue hardships for [Black and Puerto Rican] students” (p. 3). The debate between the protesters and the Onyx Society transcended the debate over physical space. An ideological confrontation regarding race relations on the campus emerged from the dialogue over alternatives for Site Six. The protesters argued that the administration used the expansion of the SEEK program as a fulcrum by which to leverage campus support for the expedient construction of the temporary huts. President Gallagher firmly denied this accusation at the same time Edwin Fabre and his organization challenged the protesters to come up with new issues for their “student power” movement that did not place the ability of Black and Puerto Rican students to access higher education in a tug-of-war with the administration (p. 3). The Onyx Society, separate from the demands of the student protesters, drafted a resolution demanding that Gallagher commit to moving the SEEK program into Mott Hall by the spring term. Onyx President Edward Fabre stated “we will not allow green grass to take priority over black students” and challenged the “white liberals” and “hippies” protesting the construction of Site Six to recognize that issues of race were being silenced by continued protest over open space (Goldwasser, 1967, p. 3). Fabre’s arguments also addressed the college’s attempt to bifurcate SEEK and the black
student body. One member was quoted saying that it was his objective “to make it clear that we are black students first, and regular or SEEK students second” (p. 3). The debate surfaced integral issues that the college would face head-on in the years to come but the Site Six protests would continue through the weeks ahead.

Gallagher lifted the moratorium on October 25 and dropped the charges for all five arrested students (Ackerman, 1967, p. 1). Only a week later, however, the campus of City College erupted in protest again over the re-starting of the construction on Site Six. On November 1, forty-nine students were arrested after President Gallagher called police to intervene in another mass protest against the construction project (Soltis, 1967, p. 1). As a result of the arrests and the police presence on campus, similar to the situation at Brooklyn College, students vowed to boycott classes for the following day of which 60% of the student body participated in (p. 1). Scenes of chaos dotted the day beginning with President Gallagher issuing ultimatums to the students who blocked the construction site, first of suspension, then of arrest followed by police carrying dozens of students away in handcuffs, past over five-hundred protesters, and in front of a judge in a Lower Manhattan court (p. 6). Much like the demands of students at Brooklyn College, CCNY students agreed to end the boycott of classes if the administration agreed to drop the charges against the student protesters and that a joint faculty-student disciplinary committee be organized and that this body would be charged with the power to call the police to campus. President Gallagher refused to give up his authority to call police to campus but reminded students that the so-called Committee of Seventeen that had recently reviewed campus policy argued in favor of the student-faculty disciplinary committee (Ackerman, 1967, p. 3). Over a protracted month of indecision, President Gallagher in concert with the Manhattan District Attorney decided to drop the charges against the
student protesters as construction on the site and the expansion of City College continued. Ultimately, the years leading up to Open Admissions would be characterized by protest movements that ultimately conflicted with one another and at times threw the campus into uncharted territory. In the months ahead, CCNY would be the site of numerous battles, all of which would reshape the campus and the University.

**The Onyx Society.** Onyx Society President Edwin Fabre was quoted saying that “we concern ourselves with members of the Black community. They are our concern because we are part of them” (Levinson, 1967, p. 1). Moreover, Fabre believed that the Onyx Society of the City College of New York was committed to offering cultural and social opportunities for members of the black campus community and beyond the gates in the neighborhood of Harlem. Members of the Onyx Society saw their organizational mission as one of expansion and access and used the campus of City College as the central operating headquarters of what they believed was a larger black movement focused on equity and increased representation in what were once considered white-dominated institutions. Members offered tutoring services for local schoolchildren, held clothing drives outside of gothic campus, and invited the predominately black The Symphony of the New World to play at CCNY (p. 5). Though the society largely focused on service for the local community, its membership was “perfectly willing to admit there are many in its ranks who maintain attitudes towards, what they call the ‘White Power Structure’” (p. 5). Onyx students spoke about their desire to organize, to have their voices heard, but most importantly to increase the number of black students enrolled at City College, particularly from the local neighborhood of Harlem.
On Thursday October 19, chairman of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and future central figure of the Black Panthers Party, H. Rap Brown was invited to the CCNY campus to speak to 700 people in the Finley Ballroom. Brown’s talk was “limited to Onyx Society members” (Observation Post, 1967, p. 1) and was not advertised to the larger campus community. Onyx President Edward Fabre “said the reason for the official silence was because the meeting was a ‘brother-to-brother’ talk and there was no reason for anyone else” (p. 1) to attend. Campus and local press agencies were also barred from the meeting, but Brown spoke briefly following the talk and summarized his remarks. He stated that “black students experience the same things on white campuses as in white society” and that the peace movement only took off when white students began to be drafted in greater numbers even though many black GIs had been killed in Vietnam by 1967 (p. 3). The day after Brown’s visit was replete with racial turmoil on campus regarding the perceived exclusivity of the talk. Some high-ranking officials both on and off campus suggested that Brown’s visit was segregated because it did not include a white audience and admittance was limited to only Onyx students (p. 3). Toward the end of the talk, student Roger Foster, his wife, and student councilman Alan Milner who had tickets to the event, were turned away by Onyx members and claims were made that they were denied admission because Foster’s wife was white. Foster confronted Onyx Society leadership and was eventually ushered in with his wife for the end of the event (p. 3). These reports led to an outpouring of charges and reprisals that spanned the next few weeks at City College.

By the next week, the Onyx Society was confronted with a motion in the Student Council to withdraw its publicity rights for refusing Milner entrance to the event (Muscal, 1967, p. 1). Milner charged that “he had given his ticket to a black girl who was then admitted even though her name
didn’t appear on the list” (p. 1). In the two hours that followed, the 150 members of the Onyx Society who were gathered for the meeting were confronted with challenges by Milner and other white students regarding the perception of discrimination in the entry policies for the Brown event. One Onyx member commented in the open forum that “you can rap about discrimination, but what the hell do you care” (p. 2). In the room were members of the college’s administration, all of whom agreed that the policies governing admission to the event were in accordance with University protocol for student organizations. Moreover, it was argued that clubs were permitted to use discretionary entry policies citing the case of the Young Conservative Club’s unwillingness to admit Communist students (p. 2). On the morning after the meeting, though, The Campus and Observation Post (another campus publication) printed two versions of the event. Post reported that the meeting ended with a defeated motion to suspend publicity rights for the Onyx Society whereas Campus wrote that the Student Council was going to meet again to reconsider the motion (Soltis, 1967, p. 1). In The Campus, reports claimed that the motion was tabled because council members “charged that ‘an air of intimidation’ was responsible” (p. 1) for the end of discussion on the matter. Student Government President Joe Korn determined that the heated discussion be moved to closed session, a decision that incensed Onyx President Edwin Fabre who refused to participate (p. 1). Though members of the campus administration confirmed that the Brown talk followed protocol, Korn stated that there was a distinct difference between club meetings and campus events and that the club had denied entrance to select individuals while admitting others (p.1).

The issue of the Onyx Society event was reconsidered at a Student Council meeting on November 1. When the motion was called, the council voted to censure the Onyx Society and to restrict the
organization’s ability to reserve rooms on campus for two weeks (Dobkin, 1967, p. 1). The surprise vote prompted the 100 Onyx students to walk out of the meeting in protest. Chairman of Onyx’s Educational Committee responded to the censure stating “only when it is alleged that Black kids do anything that is illegal does this Council come together” (p. 3) an argument that Korn and his Student Government denied, arguing that they only were interested in the facts of the case. A week later, a written declaration of the decision had yet to reach the desk of the Director of the Finley Student Center. One central component of the conflict between the Student Government and the Onyx Society is critical in understanding the racial friction CCNY and the other CUNY campuses were experiencing at this time. Joe Korn’s censure failed to carry any significant punishment for the black student group because the Onyx Society was labeled as a student organization by the Evening Session Student Government that “has supported Onyx’s actions” (Levinson, 1967, p. 1). The Evening Session at City College enrolled far more students of color than did the Day Session where Korn’s Student Government had jurisdiction. At the end of the fall term, black students were advocating for stronger representation on Student Government after a semester devoid of a presence in mainstream student affairs (Elson, 1967, p. 1).

**SEEK Program Threatened.** In March, the two-year old SEEK program was in peril as Governor Rockefeller spelled out a dire budget for the following year. Chancellor Bowker remarked that the Governor’s proposed budget would stagnate overall enrollment and pointed specifically to the University’s inability to proceed with the SEEK program if funding was not restored. The 1967-1968 budget from New York State allocated $2.25 million for SEEK with an additional $1.25 million allocated from the City of New York (Farber, 1968, p. 54L). Though Governor Rockefeller’s budget maintained this baseline funding for the following year, Bowker argued that
the program could not expand or support teacher training programs necessary to support the already 2,000 students in the program, 90% of whom were Black or Puerto Rican (p. 54L). In order for SEEK to grow, the Chancellor requested $10 million, 75% of which would come from Albany. The University proposed “to double full-time enrollment, quadruple the dormitory program from 100 to 400 students, and establish a stronger central staff for administration and evaluation” (p. 54L). Bowker charged that the preservation and expansion of SEEK would signal to the City that the University was committed to a strategic initiative of inclusion and access, granting opportunity to “slum youths” (p. 54L) who had been historically rejected from higher education. As evidence for his argument, the Chancellor cited a report issued by the President’s Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders that attempted to understand the episodes of racial violence that were sweeping the nation’s cities. New York City Mayor John Lindsay served as vice-chairman of the commission. In making his case for SEEK, Bowker cited a section of the report that located education as a source of sustained inequality between Blacks and Whites and a space of promise if institutions reimagined their roles in serving the community. The commission’s report recommended “enlarged opportunities for higher education through increased federal assistance to disadvantaged students” (*National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*, 1967, p. 12). The commission believed that “the bleak record of public education for ghetto children is growing worse. In the critical skills-verbal and reading ability-Negro students are falling further behind whites with each year of school completed” (p. 12). At CUNY, Bowker argued that SEEK served as a space to remedy some of this inequity and offer students from communities of color a chance to expand their opportunities for employment.
While Bowker lobbied Albany for financial support for the SEEK program, the possible elimination or downsizing of the initiative prompted some faculty to express their support of its removal. By the end of the month, word of the budget crisis surrounding SEEK had reached the campus community. CCNY Speech Professor Crane Johnson circulated a letter to department chairmen that strongly criticized the SEEK program for allowing unprepared students into courses and forcing his office into a temporary facility, giving SEEK administrators priority in Mott Hall (Sasmor, 1968, p. 3). It was as if Johnson spoke at the precise moment that the United States gave violent voice to their racism and spoke in opposition to the fearful practice of integration in neighborhoods, in schools, and on college campuses. As Johnson decried SEEK as a source of academic degradation at City College and Governor Rockefeller used the program as a political tool in a war of words with the Chancellor, the nation stopped in tearful shock as the Reverend Martin Luther King was shot and killed in Memphis, Tennessee on April 4, 1968. At CUNY, Black members of the evening and SEEK programs organized outside President Gallagher’s home near the gates of City College. As President of the Onyx Society, Edward Fabre approached Gallagher’s front door, the worn leader of City College walked to greet his student. Inviting him in, Gallagher expressed his anger for King’s assassination and informed Fabre that classes would be canceled the following day in that any desire on behalf of the students to hold memorial services on the campus would be granted. As the meeting concluded, Fabre returned to the organizers who had gathered in front of the President’s home. As the crowd continued to grow, Fabre invited students to walk with him on a memorial march through Harlem from the gates of City College to downtown toward 125th Street and East toward the Apollo Theater. As the march grew to historic numbers and members of the local community joined students from CCNY, Mayor John Lindsay appeared to greet the protesters. Students shouted, “what the hell is he doing here?” and “why’d
he come, why’d ol’ whitey Lindsay come?” in opposition to the mayor’s presence in Harlem. Fabre and a host of Black City College students led New York City in mourning during the days that followed King’s murder. Students from the non-traditional programs at CCNY established their power by organizing around the splinters of racism that had predicated their leader’s assassination. The Campus wrote, most poetically, that “the College had to come to Harlem and Harlem had overwhelmed it” (p. 2). In fact, this statement could have not been more true. The battle over the SEEK budget, Johnson’s written attack on the politics of race at CCNY, and King’s assassination affirmed that CUNY was undergoing a process of rapid demographic transformation for which there was no turning back. The conflicts between advancement and isolation were only just beginning, but it was clear that the voices of the students which programs like SEEK represented were going to emerge as a significant force of change within the history of CUNY.

The politics of race following King’s death moved through City College both overtly and through subtle resignation. To Chancellor Bowker and President Gallagher, the preservation and growth of the SEEK program was looked upon as a way to ease the racial tensions that were growing daily at CUNY and at universities across the country. As word of the content of Professor Johnson’s letter became public, it was found that he referenced SEEK students as “trash” prompting students to organize and boycott his classes (The Campus, 1968, p. 1). Crane eventually recanted under enormous student pressure and stated that he had altered his initial assessment of the SEEK program after he was provided with further evidence of its benefits (Observation Post, 1968, p. 1). At the same time, Student Government President Joe Korn remarked that he had teamed up with New York State Assemblyman Joseph Kottler to lobby for the $10 million Bowker requested for the expansion of the SEEK program (Di Falco, 1968, p. 1). If Rockefeller agreed to the proposed
allocation, the SEEK program could be expanded to what would eventually become the Baruch College of Business on 23rd Street as well as to Hunter College on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. Moreover, Korn argued that in order to secure the funding, his student organization would lead a marketing campaign encouraging parents to get involved (p. 4). However, Korn remarked that “a massive campaign at this time is not feasible and noted that ‘there’s really not much we can do’” (p. 4). Korn noted that the fate of SEEK was ultimately up to the legislature who were leery to raise state taxes during an election cycle. Though CCNY Student Government had taken up a number of issues throughout the year and had led numerous demonstrations against the college, Korn deferred to the legislature when the funding for SEEK was in jeopardy. Over seventy students, however, challenged President Gallagher to take a stronger position on the SEEK funding crisis. The students, led by members of the Onyx Society, Jarvis Tyner of the W.E.B. DuBois clubs, and Students for a Democratic Society listed four demands of Gallagher: 1) the President lead a trip of students to lobby the legislature in Albany, 2) SEEK enrollment quadruple by next academic year, 3) the college reflect the demographic of New York City in four years’ time, and 4) Gallagher establish a commission on Black and Puerto Rican Culture and History at City College (Lumenick, 1968, p. 3). As students signed petitions and prepared for their trip to Albany, State Assembly Speaker spoke to the campus community and promised that he would work to increase the funding levels for SEEK, claiming that it and programs like it promised make available education rights to all who desired it (Lumenick, 1968, p. 1). Ultimately, the threat was reversed. With President Gallagher leading the demonstration of students and CUNY legislative supporters, the colleges were able to secure $8.4 million SEEK funding, allowing for a growth of 50% in the fall 1968 term (The Campus, 1968, p. 1). At the same time, the Board of Higher Education announced that “SEEK students were to be designated as five-year degree candidates”
(p. 2), acknowledging that SEEK students were to be a part of mainstream educational policy at the colleges. As the program continued to grow in the coming years, its students would be central to the radical shifts in enrollment policies leading up to open admissions.

The University Expands & Recalibrates

Rewriting the Master Plan. Chancellor Bowker announced in October that it would be forming a committee of faculty, students, and senior administrators to rewrite the Master Plan for both the University-at-large and for the individual colleges (New York Times, 1967, p. 63). Bowker remarked that this effort “represented the university’s first attempt to include grassroots participation in decision-making process” (p. 63). The revision of the university’s Master Plan was required by New York State law and included $500 million for impending construction projects. When the Master Plan for the University was rewritten in 1964, there was little student or faculty participation and many of the key initiatives for the colleges were designed by a committee selected by members of the Board of Higher Education (p. 63). Bowker attempted to include campus-level input in the 1968 revision and charged the colleges with forming their own committees to address the needs of their specific constituencies. By December, the Board of Higher Education announced that it was planning to “spend $600-million on new facilities by 1975” (Buder, 1967, p. 404) and hired a team of world-renowned architects to lead projects on several campuses. Chairman of the Board of Higher Education, Porter Chandler, “noted that the role of the architect-planner represented a new concept in university operations” (p. 404) and marked a new era in the University’s history where long-range planning and strategic design of modern physical plants were seen as parallel interests to academic pursuits.
At City College, President Buell Gallagher interpreted the Chancellor’s directive as a way to create further unity on what was becoming a divided and divisive campus. Gallagher organized a “30-member committee-evenly divided between students and teachers” with “no restrictions on what they will consider” (p. 63). After the major challenges that City College faced during the fall semester over the construction of Site Six and the conflict between Student Government and the Onyx Society, Gallagher believed the student-faculty committee charged with revising the college’s Master Plan would be viewed as an effort to bridge some of the divides at the college (p. 63). At the committee’s first meeting in October, President Gallagher raised several questions for members to consider as they began their work on the Master Plan’s revision. First, he asked whether or not the college should operate on a three or four semester schedule so that classes could run for the entire year. Second, he questioned whether the day and evening sessions of the college should be merged to create one student body, an issue that would dominate the conversation in the months to come. Gallagher also focused on ideas for building dormitories for both students and faculty so that City College could operate as a residential campus (Levinson, 1967, p. 1). Shortly after the committee began its work, early recommendations were made available to the campus community. Students and faculty on the committee preliminarily recommended: 1) joint bachelor-masters programs, 2) an experimental college with “unstructured education”, 3) significant expansion of the SEEK program, 4) revised academic calendar that would allow for a full summer session, 5) student representation on faculty tenure committees, 6) admitting more out-of-state residents to increase revenues for the college (Ackerman, 1967, p. 4). However, the committee voiced concern alongside their recommendations. Gallagher’s insistence that the Master Plan revision process be a combined campus effort, the committee found that its calls for proposals
from students and faculty largely went unanswered (p. 4). Even through the challenges, though, one significant proposal emerged that promised to reshape the culture of the institution.

In late November, the School of General Studies subcommittee that was responsible for reviewing its section of the Master Plan prepared a recommendation that the day and evening divisions of the college be merged (Ackerman, 1967, p. 1). If approved, the proposal would integrate the SEEK program into the traditional college schedule. Moreover, the recommendation proposed to equalize the salaries of evening session faculty with that of their day session colleagues (p. 1). Members of the subcommittee anticipated stiff resistance to their proposal from the administration and from members of the Board of Higher Education. However, the Evening Session Student Government President predicted that close to one-third of evening students would prefer to enroll in day classes and were barred from doing so because the cut-off score for admission was too high (p. 6). Even with this anticipated demand for daytime courses, the subcommittee believed that the Board of Higher Education would balk at the demand for leveling the pay of the faculty (p. 6). As the plans of the subcommittee focused on General Studies continued to develop that fall, members encountered the first round of stiff opposition related to the merger of the day and evening sessions. The subcommittee also added that, once the two sessions were merged, the college focus on increasing enrollments of “students who do not qualify to the standard City University procedure” by 15% the following year (Ackerman, 1967, p. 1). Student Government President Joe Korn immediately expressed opposition to the plan. He remarked that the merger represented a “great disservice which would damage the College as an institution of academic excellence” (p. 1). Conversely, Evening Session Student Government President Joseph Hershkowitz spoke out in favor of the proposal. From the faculty perspective, several tenured, senior members spoke out in
strong opposition to the merger. English Professor A.K. Burt predicted that there would be a mutiny from within the faculty ranks if its members were required to teach students from the evening session as part of their normal course loads (p. 1). Many more thought the proposal from the General Studies subcommittee were unreasonable and would never pass through the Board of Higher Education. However, the subtler conflicts between the day and evening sessions gained momentum in the Master Plan debate, highlighting the structural disparities that separated the two groups of students.

As the 1967-1968 academic year came to a close, the mission of the City University of New York began to change. The Master Plan, and particularly the plan proposed by President Gallagher and his faculty and students, indicated that institutional policy would be altered significantly to reflect the demographic of the City and to recognize the social restructuring sweeping the nation. The Master Plan recognized that “by 1975 admission to some unit of the University will be assured to every New York City high school graduate” and that “matriculated and non-matriculated students will occupy the same classes during a single daily fourteen-hour schedule” (Seifman & Ackerman, 1968, p. 1). Moreover, the outline of the Master Plan “calls upon the state to assume the burden of its operating costs” (p. 1), claiming that the city is perpetually in a fiscal crisis and cannot be charged with the financial stability of the University. The plan proposed, that with the support of the state, CUNY would double its enrollment by 1975 and complete over $100 billion in construction projects (p. 1). Among numerous programs that advocated for more integrative involvement with local communities, the Master Plan recognized that programs like SEEK would need further financing in order to grow. The supportive components of the SEEK program in terms of teaching and advising would need to be shepherded through its expansion. Furthermore,
the merger of the day and evening sessions along with the building of campus dormitories would be a central part of the seven-year plan that looked toward 1975 as the target year for what would historically become known as Open Admissions. However, key events across the campuses in the coming two years would hasten these initiatives and would significantly reorganize power and decision-making in the University.

1968-1969 Academic Year

Enrollment

Over the summer, the Board of Higher Education approved a radical change to the University’s admissions protocol for the upcoming fall semester. Chancellor Bowker announced that CUNY would “guarantee senior college admission to the top 100 graduates of the city’s 60 academic high schools” (Lumenick, 1968, p. 1). The new admissions standards promised to increase the percentage of Black and Puerto Rican students enrolled in the tuition-free programs at the senior colleges. Bowker noted that while the policy would apply to all academic high schools, it would also reach “students in disadvantaged area schools who have averages in the high 60’s or low 70’s (p. 1), a far cry from the mid-80s mean scores that were reported the year prior. Overall, approximately 800 students met these criteria for admissions at the sixty schools Bowker pointed to in his announcement. Close to 250 of those students accepted the offer of admission across the University (p. 1). Bowker acknowledged that the plan was “the most revolutionary undertaking the City University had projected” (p. 4) since he became Chancellor and was arguably the largest political feat for the network of college following the battle for free tuition years prior. In order to further reach populations of underrepresented students, Chancellor Bowker also proposed that the University take over the daily operations of several local high schools that would eventually become direct feeder institutions into the CUNY senior colleges. CCNY President Buell Gallagher
stated that City College would “take over” several elementary and high schools as a way to integrate the city’s higher education system with its public schools to ensure that the percentage of Black and Puerto Rican students would increase to 26% of the total University population by 1969 (p. 4). Although Bowker and CUNY administrators on the campuses publicized this shift in admissions, the events that took center stage in the coming two years suggested that slight passes at inclusion were not enough for a student body and a city that felt higher education was a civil right.

Unlike the 1967-1968 and the 1969-1970 academic years, the 1968-1969 year at CUNY is without any substantial data regarding admissions, enrollment, or campus-specific demographics. This analysis will rely on data from the 1969-1970 CUNY Data Book to address some, though not all, of the measures from the 1968 year.

Table 1.8: Senior College Enrollment Matriculated v. Non-Matriculated Fall 1968 & Fall 1967

![Bar chart showing enrollment comparison between 1967 and 1968 for matriculated and non-matriculated students.]

Source: [http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)
Table 1.9: Community College Enrollment Matriculated v. Non-Matriculated Fall 1968 & Fall 1967

The university continued to grow during the 1968-1969 academic year. Overall, the increase in students at the campuses contributed to a 3.8% growth for the University over the prior year (City University of New York, 1968, p. 3). The full-time matriculated programs at the senior colleges increased enrollment by 7.3% over the 1967 year. At the same time, the four-year institutions saw a 4.6% decline in the number of non-matriculants enrolled in evening programs. Furthermore, the community colleges noticed a 7.1% composite increase in their programs over the previous year and more importantly a 134% increase in enrollment since 1964 (p. 3). Overall growth was assisted by the opening of Richmond College and York College the year prior as the separation of Baruch and Lehman College’s from their host institutions, allowing them to begin expanding their enrollment.
Table 1.10: Racial Makeup of Matriculated Students by College 1968

Source: http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/

Table 1.11: Racial Makeup of Non-Matriculated Students by College 1968

Source: http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/
Although Chancellor Bowker attempted to rally students and faculty on the campuses around the changes to admissions policies that were enacted over the summer, the impact of those changes was modest at best. Largely, the University expanded within the same demographic areas that it had in previous years. White students remained the dominant racial group in the tuition-free matriculated programs on all the campuses, eclipsing their Black and Puerto Rican peers in some cases by 80% or more. Although programs like SEEK remained focal points for the university’s diversity and inclusion initiatives, the composite landscape illustrated a largely homogenous system. The community colleges continued to enroll the largest percentages of Black and Puerto Rican students, particularly in the evening, non-matriculated programs. The dissonance between the University’s attempts to identify itself as an inclusive network of colleges was thwarted by its own realities, however. However, Black students, particularly at City, Queens, and Brooklyn
Colleges would lead the fight for substantive change in enrollment and admissions policies in the year ahead, superseding the incrementalist approach favored by Chancellor Bowker.

The University Ruptures

Race Relations Headline the Nation, The City, and The University. In September 1968, Huey Newton, the famed leader of the Black Panther party was found guilty for murdering a police officer in Oakland, California. A year prior in October 1967, Newton was stopped by Officer John Frey in Oakland at close to 5 a.m. Witnesses for the prosecution testified that Newton had come up behind Frey’s patrol car and shot him multiple times (Turner, 1968, p. 36). However, Newton and his supporters argued that the officer, after recognizing the Black Panther’s leader, began the struggle and fired the first shots at Newton. Newton’s defense attorney remarked that the “case is an outgrowth of discrimination” (Turner, 1968, p. 94). Immediately following Newton’s conviction, students of the W.E.B. DuBois Club and the Students for a Democratic Society at City College organized a rally supporting the Black Panther Party and protesting the conviction of its leader. Co-Chairman of the DuBois Club, Lenore Weiss, noted that the “purpose of the rally [was] to educate the campus on the facts in the Newton case” (DiFalco, 1968, p. 1). The celebrity arrest of Huey Newton embroiled Black leftist groups, many of which focused on educating their constituencies, a theme that had been permeating through CCNY over the past year. While Newton’s court battle prompted groups like the DuBois Club and the Onyx Society at City College to rally around the sociopolitical narratives of Civil Rights, the daily operations of the campus indicated that the racially-focused demonstrations held over the past year were beginning to shift the culture of the City College campus. Over the summer, the CCNY Physical and Health Education Department “conducted a recreational program for the youth of the neighborhood
surrounding the college” (*The Campus*, 1968, p. 12). 5,000 children from over twenty Harlem neighborhood organizations participated in theater workshops, swimming, and sports programs (p. 12). Most notably, “the program was initiated by President Gallagher in response to requests from the community” (p. 12). At the same time, Gallagher was faced with another decision regarding the rapid integration of the Black community into the mainstream academic culture at City College. Although Gallagher’s nod to the local community by opening the campus to its young people for the summer was critical publicity for the college, the roots of the decision reflected a systemic problem that was emerging from various corners of the city.

While the City University of New York was under significant pressure from students and local communities to expand the mission of access to broaden racial diversity across the campuses, the New York City Public Schools were experiencing substantial policy changes that promised to redraw the racial map in several key districts. By 1966, Manhattan public schools were 75% non-white (Hechinger, 1968, p. 50). As a result of the white flight from the cities New York “found its educational efforts overwhelmed by growing slums and the steady influx of despondent, poor, and uneducated masses, particularly from the rural South” (p. 50). Although the city attempted to work toward integration through open enrollment of schools and the pairing of district schools on the “fringe” of Black and White neighborhoods, the systemic issues that organized racial segregation across the city made legitimate efforts at integration impossible. Moreover, opposition by local White communities who argued that “the influx of disadvantaged children into middle-class schools would depress academic standards” (p. 50) was furthered by a “fear that the exodus of white, and even Negro, middle-class parents would defeat integration” (p. 50) efforts. Efforts at system-wide integration continually failed and by the mid-60s, local communities of color
proposed that if the city could not effectively integrate the schools, they believed authority over education should be turned over to the districts who could hire administrators and teachers they believed would be serve the needs of neighborhood children (p. 50). However, as the battle for local control evolved, conflicts between the city, teachers’ unions, and communities of color were fueled by accusations of racism related to teachers’ roles in educating students. Parents in low-income communities of color charged that teachers who protested decentralization were, in effect, attempting to preserve a segregated system where Black children were relegated to under-resourced schools where their chances for completion were minimal. Teachers argued that without centralized control they would not be able to discipline children they saw as unwieldy, a claim parents argued was a “racial code word, similar to ‘law and order’ in politics” (p. 50). Many viewed the teachers as “agents of the white establishment” (p. 50) and in the case of Ocean Hill-Brownsville, the battle for local control publicized the conflict between the presence of white teachers in schools dominated by young people of color and the preservation of a system that reproduced systemic obstruction of educational pursuits for these communities through suspensions, underfunding, and exclusion.

The politics at CUNY were largely the same. In October, Chancellor Bowker remarked that the City University “may run the city high schools after [the] Ocean Hill dispute is resolved” (Ackerman, 1968, p. 1). Although the plan never came to total fruition, Bowker noted “faced with a mission of providing 100 per cent opportunity to the disadvantaged under its new admissions policy” the University found that it has “been really teaching high school material in the colleges on a remedial and supplementary basis” (p. 1). By accepting administrative authority over local high schools near the senior college campuses, Bowker believed that preparation for college-level
work could begin earlier and that the curriculum would be streamlined more effectively if managed and implemented by the university. Bowker noted that, in conjunction with local boards, the university could organize its departments of education to serve the teaching needs of specific primary and secondary schools around the college (p. 4). And, as several of the key districts in the decentralization conflict began their historical strike that fall, elements of the University’s student body quickly seized upon the opportunity to use available labor power to nurture a civic mission. On November 15, “about 80 Hunter College students detained a faculty committee for several hours in an attempt to obtain classroom credit for teaching slum children during the city teachers’ strike” (Millones, 1968, p. 26). Hunter’s President Robert Cross, remarked that the demonstration, comprised primarily of Black and Puerto Rican young women, was unneeded but that its mission to secure credit for students teaching during the strike would be considered by the administration (p. 26). Students hoped to receive “up to 15 credits in field work so that they could teach slum children during the teachers’ strike” (p. 26). The integration of the City University of New York with local communities and the attention placed on the role of the campuses in providing education for the city’s total population was only propelled by the 1968 teachers’ strike and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville case.

As the fall semester came to an end, Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton remarked that the ultimate decentralization of the city schools was inevitable, citing segregated housing patterns as the chief evidence for the impossibility of true integration (Murrell, 1968, p. 1). Certainly the City University would take an active role in supporting the transition from high school to college during the period of open admissions that followed but the project of overseeing entire school districts never materialized. However, the tenor of the teachers’ strike was critical in shoring up additional
support for the demonstrations leading to the radical shift in admissions policy in the year ahead. Sutton remarked that there was a “communications gap between teachers and their students” (p. 1) in communities of color. At CUNY, the homogeneity of the senior colleges, particularly City College, offered a clear image of the barrier between the campuses and the local communities in which they resided. CCNY Professor of Education James Shields noted that “City College should take an active role in the education of high school students of the Harlem Community immediately” (p. 3). And, just as the conviction of Huey Newton offered a space for Black students at CUNY to organize around educating the campus community on issues of structural racism, the conclusion of the teachers’ strike spurred heightened debate about educational integration and the role of Black students on the campus to effect substantial change. On December 3, Black Panther Prime Minister Stokely Carmichael “delivered a verbal blueprint for ‘armed struggle’ against American racism and capitalism” (Markin & Marcus, 1968, p. 1). With the Ocean Hill-Brownsville conflict on the minds of those in the audience, Carmichael spoke out for the formation of a “coalition of the colonized peoples of the world” (p. 1). Specifically, Carmichael voiced his opposition to the “teachers union’s campaign against community control” and labeled it “an extension of racism” (p. 1).

As Carmichael spoke, President Gallagher attempted to assuage concerns from the W.E.B. DuBois Club that demanded an end to racism on the campus of City College. Underlying the key ideological components of the Newton case and Carmichael’s speech in the Great Hall, DuBois Club members demanded that Gallagher implement immediate policy changes to CCNY’s admissions standards to ensure that: 1) the campus reflect the demographics of local high schools, 2) a new senior college be built in the coming year to handle increased enrollments, 3) “that the
community, students and faculty control the City University, 4) that Black and Puerto Rican Studies be a central component of the curriculum across the campuses (Brandys, 1968, p. 9). The ideological strains that connected the Newton case, the Ocean Hill-Brownsville teachers’ strike, and Carmichael’s visit to the campus of CCNY together forged the necessary environment for the students of the City University of New York to organize around a common demand: that the University be restructured to reflect the City of New York and that its policies be designed by those to whom it was responsible. The contributions made by leading Black political leaders and the unrest in the city’s education system generated the conditions that ultimately led to the rapid implementation of open admissions at CUNY.

The University Continues to Expand

The Budget That Changed CUNY. When the spring semester began in 1969, CUNY was reaching a critical moment in its history. The expansion of the SEEK program, particularly at City College, contributed to a small but discernible rise in the percentage of non-white students enrolled in daytime, matriculated programs of study (Sasmor, 1969, p. 1). CCNY’s enrollment of non-white students in tuition-free programs increased over 4% compared to the prior year whereas the enrollment of White students dropped by 3.5% (p. 1). As the SEEK program continued to become a central force in enrolling non-white students on the campuses, President Gallagher appointed Robert Young to lead the program. Young, an ordained minister, replaced Allan Ballard who would “go on to become the City University’s Dean of Academic Development” (Berlowitz, 1969, p. 1). Young’s appointment to lead the SEEK program was carefully arranged by Gallagher on the heels of series of violent demonstrations at Queens College that focused on the leadership of the SEEK program. To avoid additional conflict on the campus of City College, Gallagher
specifically noted that Young, an African-American administrator, was appointed in consultation with the faculty and students (p. 1). Treading carefully, Gallagher, hoped to bypass a student uprising that caught Queens College President Joseph McMurray by surprise.

On January 13, 1969, student activists broke into and destroyed a suite of administrative offices on the campus of Queens College. Reports predicted that close to fifteen Black students vandalized the office of Joseph Mullholland, the administrator responsible for the SEEK program, demanding he resign (Lubasch, 1969). The assault on Mullholland’s office was the culmination of a week of demonstrations on the campus related to the oversight of the SEEK program. At the time, Queens College enrolled over 700 students in the SEEK program. In protest of what students and faculty in the program considered to be a lack of Black and Puerto Rican representation in the administration, a “militant group, calling itself the Black and Puerto Rican Student-Faculty-Counselor Coalition…demanded that SEEK participants at Queens be permitted to hire personnel, admit students, allocate funds and alter the academic program with complete autonomy” (Lubasch, 1969). With the unrest at Queens College in mind, Gallagher hoped that the appointment of a Black administrator to the SEEK program would prevent further protest regarding the program’s operation on CCNY’s campus. Young, though, entered his role at a precarious moment. As students and faculty demanded greater representation of Black and Puerto Rican administrators of the SEEK program and fought for autonomy over its daily operation, Governor Rockefeller dropped a bombshell budget proposal in Albany that promised to “cripple the City University’s SEEK program and force a 20 per cent reduction in the size of next year’s senior college entering classes” (Ackerman, 1969, p. 1). Governor Rockefeller proposed a 5% cut for all state agencies, including CUNY, for the following year’s budget. Moreover, he argued that recent appeals by
Chancellor Bowker and senior campus administrators for the state to assume an even greater share of the fiscal responsibility for the university would not be taken up in legislative session in Albany. Rockefeller’s argument for the slash in the budget placed blame on the federal government for not returning a “fairer share” (p. 1) of total tax dollars back to the state. In response to the doomsday budget, Chancellor Bowker remarked that additional enrollment to the SEEK programs across the campuses would be suspended and that currently enrolled students would have to be dropped from the program because the financial supports promised to them could not be met. Furthermore, the Chancellor stressed that enrollments in the senior colleges would have to be cut by 3,500 students to conserve resources (p. 1). The budget contradicted recent attempts by the City and its Mayor John Lindsay to increase the level of state support for the University. Lindsay urged the Governor to “assume 75 per cent, or $49 million more, of the senior colleges’ net operating costs” (p. 1) by 1970. However, Governor Rockefeller’s budget proposal indicated that the state was unwilling to support the Mayor’s proposal, putting CUNY in the grips of months of perilous negotiations that threatened to wipe away plans for open admissions.

A few weeks after the budget was handed down from Albany, Black and Puerto Rican students at City College walked out of a Student Advisory Council meeting where issues of expansion and finance were on the table. The meeting, which included student representatives from across the University, signified the fissures between White and non-white students. In dialogue around two major proposals for handling the budget crisis, Black and Puerto Rican students differed significantly from their White peers in how they planned to respond to the Governor’s assault on CUNY programs. The two proposals presented by Richmond College Student Government Chairman Louis Dheilly were: 1) use normal channels of communication to express dissatisfaction
with the proposed budget and 2) students mobilize to communicate the budget shortfall to communities across New York City (Murrell, 1969, p. 1). White students focused on operating through “normal channels” regarding a response to the Governor’s budget. Black and Puerto Rican students, acknowledging that the entire SEEK program could be dismantled if funding was not restored, argued that normal channels of communication would not be severe enough to get the Governor’s attention and to reverse the damage (p. 1). One student reacted to the proposal stating “you tell Bowker and the others that either they are going to spend the money for the programs or they will spend the money repairing the damage we are going to do” (p. 1). The significant threat to the SEEK program and its impact on the local Black and Puerto Rican communities prompted a more vocal response from student activists who recognized that any reduction in funding for the SEEK program “would affect many black and Puerto Rican high school students whose only hope to go to college lies in the SEEK program” (p. 1). But, the situation for President Gallagher was far larger than the SEEK program itself. Shortly after the budget was announced and students began organizing around issues of the budget as it affected the racial makeup of the University, Gallagher again stated that he could not foresee how the college would open the following fall if the budget was not restored. However, this time, Gallagher’s administrative council voted in favor of freezing all admissions decisions for the following year until July 1, 1969 and to curtail any hiring of faculty and staff for the remainder of the spring semester (Ackerman, 1969, p. 1). CUNY’s Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs Robert Birnbaum remarked that the ongoing battle between the State and the City over the City’s request for the State to increase their share of responsibility for the financing of CUNY was deepened by the fiscal crisis impacting the five boroughs. He stated that “in addition to the cut affecting the state’s 50 per cent share of expenses, another 5 per cent cut reduced the state’s aid to the city, which in turn affected the city’s
contribution to the University” (p. 1). Realistically, Chancellor Bowker was saddled with a budget that reflected a further reduction in aid from the City by close to $8 million, increasing the severity of the State’s reduction. At the same time students and faculty focused their attention on forcing Albany and now City Hall to reinstate the proposed loss in funds, others were more suspicious of Chancellor Bowker’s decision to curtail admissions until the summer. Key members of the University’s Alumni Association suggested that the delay was simply Bowker’s way to force the University away from remaining a tuition-free system hoping that he could increase revenue by establishing yearly fees for students (p. 1).

Newly appointed Professor of English Wilfred Cartey rightly prophesied that “the threat of an explosion is a real one. It is so real that I am scared” (Seifman, 1969, p. 1). Cartey’s attempts to institutionalize Black and Puerto Rican Studies at CCNY came at the same time as Chancellor Bowker was being accused by lawmakers in Albany of falsifying enrollment data in order to receive additional financing for the University (Ackerman, 1969, p. 5). Both Republican and conservative Democrats accused Bowker not only of spiking admissions totals north of 9,000 additional students that were actually enrolled but also charged the Chancellor of using student organizations to do the political bidding of the University (p. 5). However, the politics in Albany had also taken a turn toward the right, an historical indication that funding for the progressive University would hang in the balance. More moderate members of the legislature in Albany who were quick to support additional funding for CUNY in the liberal-leaning years prior turned more conservative in order to protect their seats. The lack of political capital in Albany coupled with a mayor who wanted to offload additional fiscal responsibility for the institution onto the state left CUNY fighting for itself with little support from external stakeholders. The student
demonstrations that would follow in the weeks ahead, however, would spell out clearly for Governor Rockefeller the power with which the student body could operate and how the collective response to the budget crisis would ultimately pave the way for the policies that provided the framework for open admissions.

March 18, 1969 was a “beautiful spring morning at the College; blue skies floated benignly over Convent Avenue as buses waited near the gates” (Sasmor, 1969, p. 1). Students entering the busses lined near the gates to City College carried painted signs that read “Kiss Me, I’m for CUNY” and “Rocky’s a Truant, He Cuts Classes” (p. 4). That morning, over 11,000 students from the City University of New York traveled together to Albany to protest Governor Rockefeller’s deep budget cuts. Student leaders from the campuses “conferred with Governor Rockefeller for more than an hour” urging him to consider “four basic demands to assure sufficient financing for the University next year” (Ackerman, 1969, p. 1). The Governor responded that his budget would include a 10% increase in overall financing and “money for 17,000 entering freshmen, provided that enough city support came through” (p. 1). Student activist leaders walked away with two key promises from Rockefeller: 1) That SEEK would be a priority in terms of funding no matter how the budget negotiations concluded and 2) that a new financing plan would be drafted for subsequent years so that the University did not fall victim to surprise shortfalls from the state (p. 1). However, even with the promise to pay close attention to the financing of the SEEK program, demonstrators on the front lawn of the capitol were far more suspicious of the Governor’s response. Demanding that Mayor Lindsay’s City Hall match $99.3 million in funds for CUNY, Governor Rockefeller spotlighted Lindsay’s resistance to financing the SEEK program from the city budget (p. 4). Black and Puerto Rican demonstrators at the capitol acknowledged that an affirmative
response for SEEK financing was needed from the Governor since “the Mayor has said he will allocate no money” (p. 4) for the SEEK program. And although Governor Rockefeller promised students that he would prioritize SEEK in the budget, the total budget was still in jeopardy and hung in balance between the political fallout between Albany and City Hall.

By the following week, it was becoming clear that the student protests had achieved their goal. It was anticipated that the $240 million shortfall in the budget was to be recovered in legislative session as students had received commitments from double the number of legislators needed to overturn the plan (Seifman, 1969, p. 1). University administration, however, argued that while the restoration of the $240 million was a victory on the part of the students, it would only cover baseline expenses and would be unable to support significant growth for the colleges (p. 1). And though tensions in Albany had calmed for the moment, the University now turned its attention to Mayor Lindsay and the City which was responsible for matching state funds for the University. Lindsay remarked that because the Governor had issued a 5% cut to all state agencies, the City would not be able to provide its share of financing for CUNY, ultimately leaving the University with an unrecoverable shortfall prompting the closing of colleges and the elimination of the SEEK program. With only $180 million promised from the City, the University would be hit with an additional $60 million shortfall in unmatched funds from City Hall. Chancellor Bowker believed that the political infighting between Albany and the City would ultimately lead to racial conflict between White and non-White students on the campuses. Bowker remarked that the “tension between Jews and Negros might ‘explode’ if the University were forced to reduce the size of its freshman class in September because of budget cuts” (Knight, 1969, p. 1). In fact, Bowker mentioned that he had received “hundreds of letters and phone calls” (p. 1) from Jewish parents
recommending that programs like SEEK be cut before enrollment to tuition-free, daytime programs were curtailed. However, it was soon to become clear that Chancellor Bowker would be forced to act expeditiously, with or without a budget on the matter of race relations at the colleges. In the coming weeks leading to the end of the spring semester, the political fallout on the campuses would be astronomical, leaving Bowker an institution in tatters.

On March 31, 1969 City College’s storied President Buell Gallagher resigned in protest over the budget cuts to the university. Buell Gallagher was born in 1904 in Rankin, Illinois to Reverend Elmer Gallagher. One of four children, Gallagher married June Simpson after graduating from Careltion College. At 27 years old, young Buell was ordained as a Congregationalist minister and moved to Passaic, New Jersey in 1931 to begin his career. A short three years later, Buell Gallagher was appointed as president of Talledega College, “one of the South’s five leading Negro colleges” (Soltis, 1969, p. 2). After ten years as president, Gallagher assumed the role of Professor of Ethics at the Pacific School of Religion where he unsuccessfully ran for a California congressional seat in 1948. Before arriving at City College in 1952, Gallagher served as Assistant Commissioner of Higher Education under President Truman. A force of nature, and a dynamic leader, Buell Gallagher guided City College, and the University, through the tumultuous 1960s. However, by the end of the decade he saw a University in despair and recognized that he could no longer play victim to the state’s political machine (p. 1). In his letter of resignation submitted to the Board of Higher Education, Gallagher noted that the budget cuts were the “coup de grace” (Lumenick, 1969, p. 1) for the City University of New York. Almost immediately following Gallagher’s shocking announcement, members of the University community imagined that his resignation was a political stunt meant to put pressure on state and local leaders who were
threatening to vanquish CUNY’s coffers. A string of CCNY senior administrators including Dean of Students Nicholas Paster and Dean Bernard Sohmer of Curricular Guidance expressed their deep disappointment over the President’s resignation.

Gallagher had led CCNY for sixteen years, a legacy that he briefly but eloquently detailed in his letter of resignation to the board. Gallagher wrote, “among measures necessary if we were to attempt to open our doors under such a budget next September would be these: 1. Admit no freshman class; 2. admit no entrants to the SEEK program; 3. Close the evening and summer sessions; 4. Scrap our plans for black and Puerto Rican studies; 5. Terminate graduate work” (Gallagher, 1969, p. 3). Calling the budget decision “stupid” and “unconscionable” Gallagher blamed his departure from the “fellowship” of CUNY that he had come to love so much on the “insulting” politics between the State and the City (p. 3). Yet, even after the vitriol of his letter was made public, students and faculty still believed Gallagher would return. He had, in fact, done this before. In 1961, Gallagher resigned from his position as CCNY president and taken a post as Chancellor of the California State higher education system. His exit from City College eight years prior was also a result of the state’s unwillingness to fund graduate education (Lumenick, 1969, p. 1). However, Gallagher did not leave City College immediately. Prior to his departure, the College and the University would experience one of the most impactful and effective student demonstrations that CUNY had ever witnessed. Its results would be long-lasting and its policies would be permanently implanted into the soul of the University.

On April 21, 1969, City College served as the parade grounds for over 1,000 students boycotted classes in support of a set of eight demands for Chancellor Bowker and campus leadership. The
strike, which merged five demands from Black and Puerto Rican students with three demands of leftist student groups, was organized around a march from the Cohen Library to the North Campus quad (Sasmor, 1969, p. 1). The Black and Puerto Rican students demanded: 1) a School of Third World Studies, 2) a separate orientation for students of color, 3) administrative autonomy of the SEEK program, 4) the racial composition of the freshman class match that of local high schools, 5) that Black and Puerto Rican history and Spanish language be a requirement for all those who majored in education (Sasmor, 1969, p. 2). The three demands from the leftist groups included: 1) open admissions for all, 2) working-class and Third World studies, and 3) taxing banks and corporations rather than the working-class (p. 2). Students from both organizations rallied with others from across the University and met in front of the administration building on the campus of CCNY where leaders held a mock trial with charges brought against Racism on Campus (p. 1). Members “at the open-air court poured kerosene on the life-size, stuffed sheet dummy, labelled ‘Racism,’ and set it on fire” (p. 1). Rick Reed, spokesman for the Black and Puerto Rican Students Community (BPRSC) remarked that President Gallagher did not understand the gravity of the demands and further explained that the demonstration was organized to convey to the administration that students wanted power over campus policy, particularly where it involved the representation of students of color. Reed stated, “niggers is groovy people. But we want all field niggers. We got no hang-up about you (whites) being here so long as we’re all here” (p. 2). In response to the eight demands, Gallagher, on the heels of his shocking resignation acknowledged that the would ensure that the requests for Black and Puerto Rican studies courses would be fulfilled as well as for stronger representation of the student population in the administration of SEEK. He did, however, argue that the demands for increased and more representative enrollment could not be fulfilled unless the budget gap was remedied by the state and the city (p. 1).
Nine days later, however, it was clear that Gallagher’s consolation was not enough for the student body. On April 22, “a coalition of black and Puerto Rican students” (Seifman, 1969, p. 3) blockaded the South Campus rendering City College entirely inaccessible. A strike on classes was announced and Black students “made clear that there [would] be no classes until their demands [were] acted upon” (p. 3). Although recent demonstrations on the campus, the resignation of Buell Gallagher, and the strike of classes the previous Monday had pushed campus administrators to announce the implementation of some of the demands “before the Tuesday seizure the College was content to implement the demands at its own pace-the slow dragging pace of the sprawling urban university” (p. 3). Throughout the week, President Gallagher met with an eight member group of Black and Puerto Rican students who represented the voices of those who demanded that the proposed changes be implemented immediately. By April 25, the College remained closed as a result of the strike. President Gallagher acknowledged that classes would be cancelled the following Monday. At the same time, the faculty voted to leave the “College’s future securely in the President’s hands” (Ackerman & Lumenick, 1969, p. 1) recognizing that students from the BPRSC would only negotiate with Gallagher. Members of the instructional staff also voted to allow negotiations to continue regarding the shutdown, to allow protesters to remain on campus, and prevent any member of the campus community from bringing the police on grounds to settle the fracas.

Students from the BPRSC accused the faculty of not supporting the strike and charged professors with allowing inaction to continue regarding the eight demands (p. 2). However, the faculty meeting held in the Great Hall proved successful for the student demonstrators. The 250 faculty
representative body voted squarely not to allow police on the campus. With the main gates to the campus still chained shut and guarded by leaders of the Black and Puerto Rican student groups, New York City police officers were turned away by the growing coalition when they attempted to cut the chains off of the iron gates. White students were refused admittance. Those who had been on campus were now gone. As marchers from the demonstration filed down major streets surrounding the campus, Black students issued a statement to the administration saying “we are all niggers, that so long as some people are the victims of oppression none of us are free,” insisting that “all students have the power to control their university” (p. 2). In Harlem, community members spoke out in support of the takeover by the Black and Puerto Rican students. Flyers from students flooded the streets and were written in both English and in Spanish “outlining the five demands” (p. 2). By Wednesday afternoon of the first week of the takeover, “the South Campus was officially renamed ‘The University of Harlem’” (p. 2) and signs were drawn up to be placed over the 133rd Street gate.

In Albany, the takeover fueled the Governor’s frustration with CUNY and its top brass. Rockefeller signed a bill requiring “all colleges in the state to adopt within 90 days specific measures for dealing with disorders or face loss of all financial aid from the state” (Wyman, 1969, p. 3). At City Hall, City Council President Francis Smith condemned the takeover on campus and ordered CUNY to take action against the protesters immediately. Labeling the protesters “minority extremists,” Smith issued a stern reminder to Gallagher and Chancellor Bowker that this perceived lawlessness on the campus was a death knell for any budget increases. By May 5, the Board of Higher Education approved legislation that signaled to the colleges of the state that campus administrators should not negotiate with radical student groups and must “refuse to grant amnesty
to students who have been charged by civil authorities” (Sasmor, 1969, p. 1). At the same time this broad proclamation was distributed to the campuses around the state, Chairman of the Board of Higher Education, Porter Chandler and fellow board members filed an injunction with the 26th precinct of the New York City Police Department order members of the BPRSC to “cease and desist” (Murrell & Wyman, 1969, p. 3) actions related to the shutdown of CCNY. The complaint named the Black and Puerto Rican Student Community of City College as the respondent and the order was signed by Associate Dean of Students James S. Peace (p. 3). When the injunction was served at the end of the day on May 5th, lawyers appeared on campus to notify students of the civil charges that would be brought against them if they did not forfeit control of City College. The injunction was supported by an additional lawsuit brought by City Controller Mario Procaccino ordering President Gallagher to reopen the college and take back control from the students. Similar suits were brought by members of the legislature demanding that City College be reopened.

For the students, however, the University of Harlem represented a possibility not only to have their Eight Demands met but to signal to the city and the state that Black and Puerto Rican representation at the college was redesigning the culture of the University. Prior to the injunction, student representatives from the BPRSC had been locked into negotiations with members of the Board of Higher Education and President Gallagher regarding quotas for minority enrollment for the following academic year. In the final week of the shutdown, Gallagher and student leaders painstakingly discussed how the college would “reserve a much greater number of freshman places to those who could not meet prevailing academic average and competitive examination standards” (Ackerman, 1969, p. 1). The BPRSC “put forward a formula calling for the admission of 60 per cent of next fall’s entering class under considerations of academic potential, similar to those of the
SEEK program” (p. 1). Of that percentage, 40% would be reserved for Black and Puerto Rican students and an additional 20% would be apportioned to low-income students (p. 3). President Gallagher remained open to the possibility of such a quota but argued that no more than 40% of applicants be judged on potential rather than prior academic achievement (p. 3). While Gallagher and student leaders spent days discussing possible quotas, the Faculty Council of Liberal Arts and Sciences voted to have enrollment policies follow a broader categorical system that attempted to divide applicants based on geographic and socioeconomic measures rather than racial percentages. Talks between Gallagher and the student groups continued with little success. Although Gallagher was willing to compromise on the institution of racial quotas, leaders of the BPRSC were not convinced that their demands would be met and were outraged by the injunctions being handed down by police and the Board of Higher Education’s mandate that the College be reviewed by a Board of Overseers as a result of the recent shutdown.

Only two days before the shutdown ended, the South Campus was the scene of one of New York City’s greatest convocations. Over 200 people took shelter on the lawn as part of the first “Open House of the University of Harlem” led by Emory Douglas, Minister of Culture of the Black Panther Party. Audience members listened to speakers like H. Rap Brown and Congressman Adam Clayton Powell who hailed the shutdown an enormous success for Black and Puerto Rican communities in New York. Powell lauded the demonstration as “one of the greatest test events in the history of Negro education” (Sasmor & Foty, 1969, p. 5). Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton “called for implementation of an admissions plan reflecting ethnic proportions in the city high schools, and Spanish and black and Puerto Rican studies requirements for education majors” (p. 5). Sutton’s contemporary in the Bronx, Herman Badillo, called the admissions requirements
to enroll at CUNY “ridiculous” (p. 5). By the next day, the injunction was served and students were given an option to remain on campus and be arrested or to return control of City College to the administration. All, however, was not lost.

The fourteen-day lockdown of City College ended on Monday May 5, 1969 with incredible success. Student leaders had forced the hand of both Albany and City Hall in securing a budget and paving the way to a true policy of open admissions. Although budget cuts from the city still posed a problem for the University, it was able to send acceptance letters to 20,000 students who would be required to take no more than twelve credits in the upcoming fall semester to offset the gap in fiscal resources (*The Campus*, 1969, p. 1). Although the credit hour cap reflected the city’s unwillingness to budge on the budget negotiations even after City College’s shutdown, the University was allocated an additional $5 million from the state in appropriations for the SEEK program, which before the shutdown was going to be all but eliminated. SEEK resources were part of a comprehensive state budget that all colleges in the state except for CUNY had to compete with one another for. Because the SEEK program represented a specific need in New York City, allocations for the program were apportioned differently. In “an attempt by Senate Republicans to strip the University’s priority status in the distribution of SEEK funds throughout the state fell through in the last minutes of the legislative session” (*The Campus*, 1969, p. 1) with Democrats voting to preserve CUNY’s favored status. Legislators who supported the SEEK program secured half of the allowance for comparable state programs for SEEK. In terms of enrollment, the additional funding allowed for 500 additional students to be enrolled in the upcoming fall semester (p. 1). The additional funding energized the BPRSC student leaders who remained committed to their five demands.
On Friday May 16, Black and Puerto Rican leaders met with members of the Faculty Senate and members of the Board of Higher Education. However, this time, they were without their committed leader. Buell Gallagher had officially left his post as President of City College. In his place, long-time biology professor Joseph J. Copeland was appointed acting president of the college. In his first address to the protesting students, Copeland said that a schedule for resumed talks around their five demands would resume immediately after a schedule was arranged (Foty, 1969, p. 4). Conflict between Copeland and student leaders arose almost immediately following his appointment. The BPRSC wanted the now-open campus to host a series of workshops around the five demands rather than holding regularly scheduled classes. However, the Faculty Senate ruled 29-11 to hold classes, a decision that students claimed Copeland pressured them to make. Furthermore, students questioned Copeland’s position regarding Gallagher’s decision to keep the college closed during negotiations during the takeover. Copeland was part of a small group of faculty who supported Gallagher’s decision to keep the gates closed. However, as President of CCNY, Copeland promised to keep the doors to City College open for all students during continued talks over the five demands. He also questioned a central component of the students’ demands on enrollment policies. Copeland believed that “under an ethnic quota system not everyone admitted would have such ability or aptitude” (Lovinger, 1969, p. 1). In response, two key faculty Dean Robert Young of the SEEK program and English Professor Wilfred Cartey called for another strike by the Black and Puerto Rican faculty in response to Copeland’s lukewarm reception of the five demands. Moreover, they condemned Copeland’s position on allowing police to remain on campus after its reopening, arguing that his decision went in direct contradiction with that of the wishes of the faculty and students (Murrell, 1969, p. 2). Students argued that Copeland’s
insistence on keeping the college open was an effort to create an illusion that talks were proceeding and that life at City College was returning to normal. However, without the five demands met, the BPRSC and other activist groups maintained that mobilization efforts would continue.

Alongside the student body, it was the faculty who ultimately set the tone for the preamble to open admissions. With Gallagher gone, their voice moved to the center of the debate over how best to redraw the demographic landscape of City College. The Faculty Senate resolved that for the 1970-1971 academic year, a dual admissions policy be implemented, “one part using academic potential as the criterion for students from poverty areas and from poor performance high schools, the other part using the traditional entrance procedures based upon the composite score” (Murrell, 1969, p. 5). A pilot program was voted to be implemented in the coming fall semester that would be supervised and assessed by a joint committee of faculty, administrators, and members of the BPRSC (p. 5). The Faculty Senate made bold strides in affecting the future of admissions at City College, precedent that would ultimately cascade to the other colleges across the University. Moreover, the Senate was able to begin discussions on the best way to initiate a School of Ethnic Studies, another one of the central demands of the Black and Puerto Rican student groups (p. 5). With many of the Five Demands beginning to gain traction at City College, the year’s turbulence and triumphs would herald in the next year, the final year before the implementation of the broad open admissions policies that would transform the University for decades to come.
1969-1970 Academic Year

Enrollment

In the year prior to the implementation of open admissions, the University continued its growth in enrollment. Over 4,000 new students were added to the matriculated programs at the senior colleges and an additional 2,500 enrolled in the community college daytime programs. As a result of the expansion of the four-year college system, the number of non-matriculated students decreased as additional resources were allocated to programs like SEEK. Although the budget battle the year prior had been one of historic nature, the apportionment of state financing for the University allowed for its continued expansion even though the city failed to meet its obligations. By the start of the academic year, there were 10,621 in “special programs for the educationally disadvantaged” (City University of New York, 1969, p. 1). This number had doubled from the previous year’s 5,520 (p. 1). Over a five-year period, the University’s enrollment had increased by 32.2% with the largest increase of 167% at the community colleges (p. 1). At the time the data were published, the University had expected to open two new community colleges. However, these projects were not completed. However, the figures presented included substantial gains in enrollments absent the two new campuses.
Table 1.13: Senior College Enrollment Matriculated v. Non-Matriculated Fall 1968 & Fall 1969

Source: [http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)

Table 1.14: Community College Enrollment Matriculated v. Non-Matriculated Fall 1968 & Fall 1969

Source: [http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)
Of the colleges, the City College of New York enrolled the highest number of students in the SEEK program. Although the college’s goal was to have 2,075 enrolled in the program by the fall 1969, they had succeeded in securing spots for 1,503 SEEK students (p. 4). At the time, Queens College also enrolled close to 1,000 students of color in the SEEK program. The newly minted Baruch College of Business and Richmond College housed the fewest students in the program.

Table 1.15: Total University Enrollment By Race (in %)

Source: [http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)
Table 1.16: Matriculated Students By Race and College (in %)

![Bar chart showing matriculated students by race and college.]

Source: [http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)

Table 1.17: Non-Matriculated Students by Race and College (in %)

![Bar chart showing non-matriculated students by race and college.]

Source: [http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)
By 1969, the university charged $54 per course in the senior colleges and $45 per course in the community colleges for non-matriculated students to enroll in classes (p. 2). Although the large majority of Black and Puerto Rican students enrolled at the university were still considered non-matriculants, the central administration did report that “black and Puerto Rican enrollment increased from 11.3% in 1968 to 14.9% in 1969 among all matriculants” (p. 3). With the expansion of programs like SEEK, “greater increases in minority group enrollments were seen among the matriculated rather than the non-matriculated students” (p. 3). The report on enrollment figures in the fall 1969 semester established preliminary parameters for the open admissions policies that would go into effect the following year. The Board of Higher Education initially established six guidelines that the university was to follow when implementing open admissions. They were:
1. Admission to one of the colleges was to be guaranteed to all New York City high school graduates.

2. The University would provide remedial education services.

3. The University would maintain its commitment to academic excellence.

4. The colleges would become ethnically integrated.

5. Students would be able to move between the colleges of the University with ease.

6. The University would continue to admit students who had previously been enrolled in the colleges prior to open admissions.

Moreover, the proposed policy specified ten groupings for student applicants based on class rank or high school average. Students in the “higher groupings would receive preference for admission in the college of their choice, but no eligible student [would] be denied a place at a City University college under this program” (p. 6). In addition to the open admissions policy, the University planned to expand the SEEK program in 1970 by 85% (p. 7). Additionally, the Board of Higher Education emphasized the need to expand career programs in the community colleges and required “the initiation of and expansion of programs of supportive services, including counselling, remedial assistance, tutoring and financial aid” (p. 8) to ensure that students admitted under the open admissions plan did not fail. The months ahead told the story of the policy debates leading up to the open admissions initiative in the fall 1970. Debates between constituency groups moved the initial policy recommendations ahead and crafted the architecture of CUNY’s effort to provide open admissions to the people of the City of New York.
The Architecture of Open Admissions: A Month-By-Month Account

September. At the opening of the academic year, Chancellor Bowker was hastily in search of a leader for City College. Since the campus was going to be the centerpiece of the open admissions experiment, Bowker wanted to ensure that its leadership was stable. Initially, Bowker turned his attention to Bronx Borough President Herman Badillo. Badillo declined Bowker’s offer leaving the central office running interference, denying that they had ever approached the borough president altogether (The Campus, 1969, p. 1). Big plans were in the works for City College and the University knew that without a permanent president, it was possible that the campus could backslide into the chaos of the year prior. The search committee for a new president continued its work during the fall semester as Bowker and university administrators prepared for a rapid expansion of the current physical plant. Still awaiting official word from the legislature on the budget for open admissions, the University announced that a Freshman Center would open at 125th Street and 7th Avenue to support City College and that the campus planned “to open a remedial center at the Harlem location” (Lumenick, 1969, p. 1). The College also planned to institute a three-semester academic calendar to accommodate a 40% increase in enrollment “without adding additional facilities” (p. 1). Students would attend two out of the three semesters allowing for necessary flexibility in the use of campus space. Acting President Copeland, though, noted that the College was looking to procure additional space at the former Hotel Teresa on 124th Street to accommodate a vastly larger student population (p. 1). Copeland remarked that “the Hotel Teresa could accommodate from three to four thousand students” (p. 3) with significant renovation.

At Queens College, tensions were heightened compared to the rest of the University as the fall semester got underway. At the conclusion of the previous year, SEEK faculty member Samuel
Anderson’s contract was not renewed for the 1969-1970 academic year (Fox, 1969, p. 32). Dean of Faculty, Robert Hartle, obtained a restraining order aimed at “blocking disruptive protests by members of the Black and Puerto Rican Student, Teacher, and Counselor Coalition” (p. 32) who had promised reprisal if Anderson’s contract was not renewed. At the time, the Queens College coalition was comprised of close to 850 students and faculty, all of whom were connected to the SEEK program. According to the Dean, the dismissal of Anderson stemmed from a recent faculty review in accordance with a newly implemented Board of Higher Education policy that determined that all SEEK faculty be evaluated through the normal annual peer review process, a mandate that many saw as an obstacle for many SEEK faculty to surmount. And although the small scuffle at Queens College was insignificant in comparison to the protests of the previous semester, Chancellor Bowker stated that he was “not optimistic about the likelihood of preserving peace on the campuses because of the expected militancy of black, middle-class students” (Tolchin, 1969, p. 34). Bowker was immediately caught up in a media whirlwind regarding his comments. The New York Times reported Bowker as saying that “they [middle-class blacks] haven’t learned how to rise above principle like us adults” (Seifman, 1969, p. 1). Bowker, however, was far more concerned with the budget battle that was looming, again, on the horizon and attempted to put his gaffe to rest rather quickly.

September brought with it the traditional cataclysmic foreshadowing of the university’s budget. With open admissions in the crosshairs, the budget battle between the city and the state regarding the financing of the university was historically critical. Under a newly passed state law, Albany must match the city’s allocations for the University (The Campus, 1969, p. 1). Bowker urged the city to match the additional $25 million pledged by the state in support of open admissions.
However, Mayor John Lindsay was not quick to promise the additional funds. Although City Hall readily supported the open admissions plan publicly, Lindsay was far more reluctant to set aside the resources need to support the colleges. The Mayor remarked that open admissions should have the full support of the legislature and should not be a political football between the city and the state. In contrast, however, he stated, “I cannot now say that the City, giving the mounting pressures on its limited revenues, will be able to provide the additional funding necessary to achieve open admissions” (p. 3).

While the fear of a false start of the open admissions plan loomed over the University, a 38-member panel began to work through the details of the enrollment procedures should they be implemented the following fall semester. Initially, the plan “called for admission of the top quarter of high school graduating classes to senior colleges, the next 40 percent to community colleges, and the remainder to educational skills centers” (p. 5). Almost immediately, members of the BPRSC argued that Black and Puerto Rican students would almost entirely be forced into the community colleges given the types of high school preparation many of these students had (p. 5). Members of the committee offered resolutions to this foreseeable problem and debated whether class rank should be included alongside a lottery system that would allow for additional representation across racial lines, particularly in the senior colleges. Additionally, a proposal was constructed that would require entering students to make two first choices, a senior college and a community college, and one would be chosen for them. In turn, other members argued for the abolition of the community college system entirely in favor of organizing the senior colleges as comprehensive colleges where both associate and bachelors degrees would be awarded (p. 5). Throughout the month of
September, the panel debated the best organizational structure for open admissions and planned to vote on a single proposal by October 1.

**October.** Among many key recommendations, the University Commission on Admissions advised CUNY to establish comprehensive colleges that would grant both two- and four-year degrees, expanding the missions of already established colleges rather than building new ones. Moreover, the detailed report attempted to persuade Chancellor Bowker and University administration to reduce the reliance on high school grades as a central component of the admissions process (Lumenick, 1969, p. 1). Early conversations attempted to resolve the undesirable stigma attached to the community colleges which had “been branded as inferior to senior colleges because of their admissions standards” (p. 1). In fact, members of the committee rightly believed that open admissions students would, in most cases, opt for entrance to one of the coveted four-year institutions rather than enrolling at one of the community colleges. The report acknowledged that in order to provide classroom space, there would have to be comparable distribution of students across the two- and four-year colleges, a demand that would require the University to reevaluate its community college programs and recalibrate majors and offerings to appeal to a greater majority of students (p. 1). At the same time, Mayor Lindsay remarked that the city would commit to the open admissions process to ensure that the University would end the “politics of scarcity” (Narvaez, 1969, p. 37) in New York’s higher education system. The mayor argued that the plan recommended by the commission would correct “the present condition—where working whites and poor blacks compete with each other for the chance to learn” (p. 37). The report believed the University could achieve this type of parity by organizing the top 60% of CUNY’s student body using “each individual high school’s graduating class” because the “city
units are predominately Black and Puerto Rican” (Lumenick, 1969, p. 1). In the coming weeks, the specifics of the report would be revised further to offer additional clarity on the key components of the admissions criteria.

The development of comprehensive colleges became central to the debates on open admissions early in the academic year. In conjunction with the details of integrating senior and community colleges programs, the commission also explored the plausibility of adopting a class-rank based admissions protocol that would allow for expanded diversity in the enrollment of underrepresented minorities at the senior colleges (Buder, 1969, p. 60). The report acknowledged that the “use of class rankings would show how students ‘competed with their peers’ in the same school and would not pit students in schools with largely disadvantaged enrollments against those with greater advantages” (p. 60). The approach regarding the use of class rank to determine which CUNY college a high school graduate would be enrolled in was designed to tackle the probability that students of color would disproportionately be enrolled in lower-ranking institutions based on their high school academic background. In conjunction with this proposal, the commission also attempted to correct for racial stratification by eliminating the separation between the community and senior colleges. Noting that the each type of institution had a particular mission, it was also clear that the community college system could become a sub-par layer of the CUNY system in which students of color would be enrolled by default. Members of the commission argued that in order to offset this possibility, the community colleges must be “career, professional and technical colleges leading to associate degrees along the pattern of the best career programs” (p. 60). Newly appointed Chairman of the Board of Higher Education Frederick Burkhardt commented that in order for the proposals mentioned to be properly enacted and for the University to maintain
credibility as an academically rigorous institution, “an awful lot of remedial and tutorial work would be needed when the enrollment plan was begun in September, 1970 (New York Times, 1969, p. 96).

The faculty senates of both City College and the City University rebuked the plan organized by the commission. In a striking condemnation of the open admissions enrollment design, the senates “all but unanimously rejected the bulk of the proposals” and also remarked that “unless adequate financing for the expansion program was provided, the open admissions policy would be a failure” (The Campus, 1969, p. 1), alluding to the creation of comprehensive colleges as a way to bypass the expenses of the expansion of physical plants. Even though the Board of Higher Education approved a $92.5 million expansion of the City College campus that promised to enroll an additional 15,305 students in eight years, the faculty remained nervous about the souring of academic standards under the open admissions protocol (Handler, 1969, p. 22). With a 53% increase requested in the following year’s budget to accommodate an enormous $128.9 million financial infrastructure for open admissions, the details of the enrollment process were slow to emerge as the fall semester progressed (Handler, 1969, p. 28). The faculty argued that admissions protocol should follow a tiered structure, enrolling the top 25% of high school graduating classes into the coveted spots at the senior colleges. Additionally, 10% of seats would be reserved for “applicants ineligible under other standards” and would be “selected by admission counselors in a manner similar to that now used by the SEEK program” (The Campus, 1969, p. 3). Faculty then recommended that the third tier be filled by students according to class rank, effectively reversing the priorities set out by the commission (p. 3). Heading into November, the commission was
saddled with making a final determination on the protocol for open admissions, contemplating the various positions of the faculty and student groups.

**November.** By November, it was clear that the politics of open admissions swelled beyond the gates of the CUNY campuses. With the Board of Higher Education slated to determine the controversial protocol for enrollment on November 10, many of the most sensitive details remained in flux. Mayor John Lindsay, who was in the middle of a heated race for reelection, clearly admonished any system that resembled the implementation of a quota (Murrell, 1969, p. 1). And while the mayor publicly supported the financing of the open admissions plan, the budget for full implementation had not yet been certified by City Hall. With the timeline of December 1 quickly approaching for finalizing the budget, University Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs Edward Hollander remarked that “a delay in certifying the budget would seriously jeopardize the open admissions program” (p. 1). Moreover, the $35.5 million that was to be earmarked specifically for the first year of open admissions was critical to ensuring that an additional 5,500 students would be enrolled in the first year (p. 1). However, debate still continued on what basis these students would be allocated to the colleges. Black and Puerto Rican constituencies argued fervently in favor of a system that would admit 60% of students on the basis of class rank, allowing for a larger number of underrepresented minority students in the admissions pool (Brandys & Kiviat, 1969, p. 2). In opposition to this proposal was Student Senate President James Landy who argued that the protocol for open admissions currently being considered all were based on “exclusionary criteria” in favor of what others called “ethnic balance” (p. 2). When the report was issued the following week, though, tensions would continue to soar as disparate groups fought for ownership over enrollment protocol.
Almost immediately, Onyx Society President Bert Ramsay “blasted the Board of Higher Education’s plan for open admissions” labeling it as a “ploy to prevent blacks and Puerto Ricans from entering the senior colleges” (The Campus, 1969, p. 1). In the long-awaited board meeting, members voted to “offer senior college admission to high school graduates next year who are in the top half of their graduating class or who have 80 averages; the remaining graduates would be offered entry into community colleges” (p. 1). Even though the plan including doubling enrollment in the SEEK program, Black student leaders rebuked the decision, characterizing it as a racist scheme that would continue to offer white students priority seating in the four-year colleges. Furthermore, Ramsay argued that the new admissions standards would create a segregated community college system that would largely be populated by low-income Black and Puerto Rican students who came from large, New York City integrated high schools that historically diminished the academic potential for students of color. Chancellor Bowker attempted to assuage concerns and noted that “every high school graduate who desires will be admitted and be given an opportunity to advance towards a degree” (Lumenick, 1969, p. 2). Under the newly adopted plan, entering students would be divided into ten groups based on “percentile rank in high school or 80 average” and “students in the first five groups, about 60 per cent of the graduates, would gain entry to four-year units” (p. 2). And although the plan adopted in November did not specifically outline how to account for the future of non-matriculated students, it was assumed that those who historically enrolled in evening courses would be absorbed by the new open admissions standards.
December. Mayor Lindsay’s commitment to the open admissions process came into question early in December after the city’s budget was approved. City Hall was, again, playing politics with Albany, attempting to offload much of the financial burden of open admissions onto the state. Lindsay’s $380 million budget increased the University’s overall allocations by $90 million, but failed to reach the $370 million requested by Chancellor Bowker (*The Campus*, 1969, p. 1). City Hall cited a “budget gap between $750 million and $1 billion” (p. 1) as the rationale for reducing CUNY’s bottom line. However, Lindsay remarked that it should be the state’s obligation to correct for the shortfall believing that Albany “spends three times as much per student in the State University” and that New York City residents should not be forced into an additional share of the financial burden (p. 1). Governor Rockefeller, however, appeared ready to veto the open admissions plan entirely, indicating that the City University was moving far too quickly in the implementation of the experimental plan, and insisting that “no one part of the higher education structure can assume the responsibility” (p. 3) of educating a larger public. In stark contrast to the voices calling for open admissions downstate, Rockefeller believed that he could recast the public higher education system across the state, similar to what Clark Kerr was orchestrating in California. Furthermore, the Governor believed that his plan for broadening access to the colleges and universities across the state would shift the power over CUNY away from City Hall and toward Albany.

While fears of a budget fallout gripped University administrators, the faculty of the City University of New York were predicting the demise of academic standards under the open admissions plan. In conjunction with anxiety over handling underprepared students in the coming fall semester, the faculty also believed that Bowker was “trying to increase his personal power” (Schumach, 1969,
p. 78) by muscling the open admissions protocol through at a breakneck speed. Believing their influence stymied, the faculty predicted what one member called the “erosion of academic life” (p. 78) at CUNY. University administrators, however, argued that the faculty were regularly consulted on the formation of the open admissions procedures, including how students would be admitted. However, across the campuses, there were local concerns grew out of the open admissions controversy. At Brooklyn College, faculty feared that, in order to enroll additional students, social science departments would be transferred to a satellite campus in Downtown Brooklyn on Livingston Street (p. 78). Alongside physical plant concerns, the faculty believed that Chancellor Bowker had irrationally reacted to the outcry of portions of the student body in their desire for an open admissions plan in the years leading up to 1970. Furthermore, many seasoned members of the instructional staff surmised that Bowker’s open admissions mandate could only be realized by centralizing power in the Office of the Chancellor. In order to appease the students and local activists, Bowker needed to siphon authority from the department chairs where academic power was historically centered. As the faculty passed resolutions attempting to secure their own power in determining academic standards and departmental protocol, the University was attempting to shore up the needed capital funds to acquire additional space to absorb additional students.

By December it was clear that there would be a major shortfall in the February 1, 1970 capital budget request drawn up by the City Planning Commission. Primarily, the University believed that the $300,000 in “design money” (Phalon, 1969, p. 80) promised to explore the possible expansion of the community college system would delay any real growth for the two-year colleges. Chancellor Bowker and his administration recognized that without immediate and expansive
growth of this sector of the CUNY system, the University would not be able to enroll the number of students it had promised. Initially, the Board of Higher Education had requested $81 million that included allocations for the expansion of Kingsborough Community College in the Manhattan Beach section of Brooklyn. The University’s rapid planning process for the additional 14,000 students who would enroll the following fall was met with “red tape in the city’s bureaucracy” that had already “not been able to convert as much as one-quarter of its available capital funds, for the most part financed by borrowing, into bricks and mortar in any fiscal year since 1966” (p. 80). Ultimately, projects like the Kingsborough expansion would be replaced by relocating sectors of individual colleges to offsite locations until physical plants could be brought up to compliance.

**January-February.** By early 1970, the open admissions budget battle appeared to have been resolved, at least in principle. In a sharp turn of rhetoric, Mayor Lindsay stated that the financial support for open admissions from the city would be available by the following fall “no matter what other city services may have to be reduced to get the $8-million to $9-million needed to pay for it” (Carroll, 1970, p. 25). Although the extraordinary $875 million budget gap the city faced had not yet been resolved, the Mayor recognized that, politically, the open admissions plan must be implemented by the fall semester. However, the City Hall and Albany also realized that the year’s budget negotiations were also shackled to grim long-range planning regarding infrastructure development vital to preserving the open admissions experiment. By February, the University surmised that it would require upwards of $1 billion in financing by 1976 to support the growth and expansion of the senior colleges, double what it had originally expected (*New York Times*, 1970, p. 35). The City University Construction Fund, a subsidiary state agency charged with the capital plans and development for the University, estimated that only $400 million was presently
allocated to handle the expansion project. Moreover, “rising construction costs and interest rates” (p. 35) had increased overall costs by 12%-15% per year through the next five years. The development of the physical plant across the University’s campuses would be critical not only to beginning the open admissions experiment but to ensuring that it would remain viable in the years to come.

March. By mid-March, the University again erupted in protest. At Queens, Hunter, City, and Brooklyn Colleges, non-matriculated students enrolled in fee-paying evening programs participated in a two-day strike of the open admissions plan. Thousands of students from the four-year colleges rallied together charging that they would “be discriminated against by the open-admissions policy” to whom the new policy “does not apply” (Lubasch, 1970, p. 31). Evening students historically provided the University with a revenue source of fees for enrolling in non-degree-seeking courses. Under the new open admissions plan, many students who would have originally been relegated to the evening programs would be accepted under the lowered admissions standards. However, those students who were already enrolled in fee-paying programs would not be eligible to apply as open admissions students because the newly implemented protocol focused on newly graduated high school students (p. 31). The two-day strike prompted campus administrators to encourage faculty members not to take attendance in their classes to allow students to protest the possible continuation of tuition requirements for evening students once open admissions was implemented. Across the campuses, students who participated in the protests rallied around several key demands: 1) all non-matriculated students be granted matriculated status under the new open admissions policy, 2) elimination of fees for all evening students, 3) commitment by University administrators that no fees will be imposed in the fall semester, and 4)
the merger of day and evening sessions to eliminate the “second class role” of the non-matriculated student body (Brandys, 1970, p. 1). In response to the protests, Chancellor Bowker remarked that a decision about whether evening students would continue to pay fees under the open admissions protocol could not be determined until “the city budget [was] announced on May 15” (p. 3). On the heels of the two-day strike, however, Chancellor Bowker recommended to the Board of Higher Education “major revisions in the structure of fees” (Malcolm, 1970, p. 79). Bowker argued that in order to support the open admissions plan, the University would need to raise an additional $17 million combined with the support from the city and state. Of three proposals, the most severe recommendation advised the Board to raise student fees from $35 a year to $110 in 1970 (p. 79). To allay some of the concerns expressed by student groups, Bowker remarked that this fee would apply to students across the board rather than to just evening non-matriculants. Furthermore, he “said $2-million of the $17-million in increased revenue would go into a special scholarship fund to help students unable to afford the fees” (p. 78). The increase in fees would eliminate “community college summer session tuition” (p. 78) and would be staggered in terms of dollar amount across the various programs. Of those students most affected would be the part-time, non-marticulant students who might be forced to pay $197.50 a year, up from $107 (p. 78). Bowker argued that the fees would be necessary to support the radical expansion under the open admissions plan.

April-May. By mid-April, the Board of Higher Education was still contemplating how to handle student fees in the year ahead. In addition to this debate, the Board was preparing to review “more than 3,000 job applications from college teachers in all parts of the United States who wish to participate in the City University’s open-admission program that will be inaugurated next autumn”
(Handler, 1970, p. 72). At this point in the academic year, over “8,500 high school graduates from disadvantaged areas in the city” (p. 72) had been promised a seat in one of the CUNY colleges for the 1970-1971 year. To support this substantial increase in student enrollment, the University estimated that it would need an additional 800-1,200 instructors across the system (p. 72). Specifically, the colleges would have to consider the backgrounds of those they were hiring. Because the majority of students enrolling at the University the following year would be underprepared for college-level work, additional “training and counseling” (p. 72) would have to be given to newly hired faculty on how to best teach classes to students with a variety of learning needs.

Hiring for the SEEK program was also complicated by consistent fluctuations in the promises by state and local officials for an increased budget. By the end of April, directors of the SEEK programs on the campuses acknowledged that to support an additional 1,500 students in the fall, their budget must be increased from the $2 million promised by the city and state (Handler, 1970, p. 49). However, there was a dispute over how the funding for SEEK was to be allocated. Assemblyman Thomas Fortune of Brooklyn advised that the budget was actually closer to $18 million and consisted of “$2-million in outright funds, $7-million in matching funds” (p. 49) which was to be matched by City Hall. The budget would include stipends of $21 per week for SEEK students and would support structural programs like remedial education and advising. However, the directors charged that they would need $21 million to support the program and had not been assured that the funds from the state would be matched by the city.
Students across the university feared that funds for key programs like SEEK would be lacking in the upcoming open admissions year. In early May, a string of protests broke out on the campuses ranging from concerns around ethnic representation to the imposition of fees. On May 1, “40 Puerto Rican students barricaded the president of Brooklyn College inside his office” (Fosburgh, 1970, p. 42) demanding that the number of Puerto Rican students be increased on the campus. On 13 of 17 campuses, protests around the raising of student fees halted classes and disrupted normal campus operations. At Lehman College in the Bronx, over 70% of students boycotted classes and at Baruch College on Park Avenue, “more than half the faculty adopted a resolution early in the week supporting the protest against increased fees” (p. 42). At each of the campuses, students voiced concerns regarding the rapid implementation of open admissions versus the reality of the logistical and financial concerns the colleges faced regarding its swift execution. Specifically, students worried that “the serious lack of funds needed to finance the new program will not only oblige the university to increase their fees but inevitably contribute to the deterioration of educational facilities generally” (p. 42). By the end of the year, though, many of the concerns students feared had been put to rest. Ultimately, the Board of Higher Education decided to leave the fees for students as they were the year prior and instead to raise the cost of graduate education. Although student activists who hoped for the entire elimination of the fee system did not achieve their intended mark, the worst-case scenario was avoided before the open admissions plan was to go into effect in the fall.
Summary

The aforementioned stories together describe the years leading to the implementation of open admissions. Though the outcomes and effects of open admissions on student success and on policy-making at the University has been widely reported, little is known about the coagulated impact of student protest and institutional reorganization that ultimately created the necessary conditions to implement such a radical social policy. In September 1970, over 35,000 students enrolled at CUNY, a 75% increase over the previous year. Many attribute the success of the open admissions plan to Chancellor Albert Bowker and a key group of University administrators. However, what is made clear through the narrative of the three years leading up to the implementation is that the policy was largely developed and initiated by coalitions of student groups stemming from key leaders in the Onyx Society, the W.E.B. DuBois Club, the BPRSG, and some members of the student governments on the campuses. Although early protest movements on campuses like City College seemed to focus on issues like the redevelopment of the grounds, the war effort, and college governance, each organized demonstration brought with it issues of racial integration and college access that eventually became central mechanisms for change at CUNY. These often overlooked stories are critical to understanding how the University readied itself for the drastic change prompted by open admissions and ultimately how the culture of CUNY would be shifted in years ahead.

Open admissions marked a period of extreme change at CUNY. Rapid and often extreme policy shifts were prompted by student activism in the 1960s. At no other period in the University’s history had the dynamics of the institutional culture been altered so dramatically in such a short period of time. In effect, activist leaders propelled leaders like Buell Gallagher of City College to
prepare the campuses to throw open their gates to the larger New York City public, abandoning years of high admission standards that had organized a white student majority. The demand for remedial education and instructional supports for underprepared students would increase and eventually would become a point of discontent for the faculty and politicians who supported CUNY. As a comprehensive policy, open admissions would be short-lived. The fiscal crisis of the mid-1970s prompted the brief closure of the campuses, substantial layoffs and furloughs, and ultimately the imposition of tuition, a first for the University. Admissions standards returned and the grand experiment ended as quickly as it began. However, reflections of the open admissions era remained for the next thirty years. Until the 21st century opened in New York City, students with remedial education needs could still enroll at the senior colleges and obtain proficiency in basic skills areas while advancing toward a baccalaureate degree. By the late 90s, the New York political establishment viewed CUNY as a disintegrating institution plagued by endless remediation. Under the direction of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, a new Chancellor of CUNY was appointed with instructions to remove remedial education from the senior colleges so that CUNY’s national reputation could be rebuilt. When Matthew Goldstein was appointed Chancellor of the City University of New York on September 1, 1999, his central objective was to raise admissions standards and remove remediation from the four-year institutions. But just as the period of open admissions was defined by key activities leading to its implementation, so were the years leading to Goldstein’s major policy overhaul for CUNY. The chapter ahead will narrate the years leading up to the next major restructuring of the University and will tell the story of the events that transpired prior to the appointment of Matthew Goldstein as Chancellor.
The End of Open Admissions at CUNY:
Remediation Concludes at the Senior Colleges
1997-1998 Academic Year

Enrollment & Completion

By 1997, CUNY undergraduate programs spanned seventeen campuses and enrolled 175,475 full-time and part-time students. Twenty-seven years after the implementation of open admissions, University enrollment had declined. Following its peak enrollment period in 1975, CUNY’s population plummeted in the aftermath of New York City’s fiscal crisis and the historic implementation of tuition and fees for all students. Although enrollments regained momentum during the 1980s and into the final decade of the 20th century, the University’s popularity as a higher education hub in New York City faltered.

Table 2.1: Trends in Total Undergraduate University Enrollment 1970-1995

![Graph showing enrollment trends from 1970 to 1995.]

Source: [http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)
The senior colleges of the University system enrolled close to 111,000 students in 1997 while the community colleges matriculated 64,000. As CUNY’s central comprehensive two-year institution, Borough of Manhattan Community College enrolled the largest number of students at any one college in 1997. Of the four-year institutions, Manhattan’s Hunter College on Lexington Avenue enrolled more than 15,000 undergraduate students.

Table 2.2: Full-Time & Part-Time Undergraduate Enrollment by College, 1997

Source: [http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)

Since the 1970s, CUNY had succeeded in implementing one of the core missions of open admissions: to increase the diversity across the campuses. Whereas in the late 1960s, the senior colleges enrolled a majority White population, the University’s demographic was far more reflective of New York City than it was three decades prior. On many of the campuses, the percentage of non-white students eclipsed the percentage of White students, a significant demographic shift that was orchestrated by the open admissions decision.
Although the University’s population shifted demographically, the late 1990s saw an increase in scrutiny related to CUNY’s effectiveness at preparing its students academically. Since the open admissions decision, remediation had become a stalwart of the CUNY enterprise. A majority of students who were granted admission to one of the senior colleges required remediation in reading, writing, or mathematics, or a combination of the three. At City College, over 70% of entrants were identified as needing remedial education upon entry and 11% of matriculants required additional basic skills work in all three subject areas. At the community colleges, students requiring remediation was far higher. At Hostos Community College in the South Bronx, only 5% of entrants were proficient in all three areas while 55% required additional developmental education in all three subject areas. Although there were distinct difference among the colleges based upon the percentage of students requiring remediation, the senior colleges were actively engaged in substantial developmental skills education in the late 1990s.
The focus on CUNY’s academic standards was influenced by the high rates of students enrolled in remedial courses compared to the University’s incredibly low completion rates. At the senior colleges, the four-year graduation rate hovered just over 4%. Moreover, the eight-year graduation rate did not manage to even reach 50%. The picture at the community colleges was far worse. Even though community college enrollment had spiked, only 1% of students graduated in two-years. This problem was compounded by the results after six-years. Of those who enrolled in one of the CUNY community colleges in the early 1990s, only 22% obtained a degree after the sixth year, prompting local and state officials to inquire into the efficacy of CUNY as a point of access for underprepared students.

The late 1990s would attempt to address high rates of remediation and low graduation rates by introducing new policies that revised the University’s approach to remedial education. A new
administration would be charged with reforming CUNY’s national image, a project that would face stiff opposition from key supporters of open admissions. Ultimately, the University would be remade as it approached the 21st century and would see its history transformed, its mission recast, and its student body shift to reflect its new values and direction.

The End of Entitlements in New York: The Fall of Open Admissions and the Demand for Accountability

Mayor Giuliani Threatens Open Admissions. For seven years, CUNY had been rattled by the chaotic tenure of Chancellor W. Ann Reynolds. Under her leadership, the university’s reputation had continued to suffer. The era of open admissions was quickly drawing to a close as a powerful new mayor attempted to reposition CUNY as a national leader in higher education. After seven years as chancellor, Ann Reynolds was forced out of her job by a newly appointed Board of Trustees supported by Albany and City Hall. The 1997-1998 year delivered an assault from City Hall, forcing the trustees and the yet-appointed chancellor to respond to constant criticism from Mayor Giuliani. At the same time Giuliani sought to reform New York City’s welfare system and other social services, Giuliani argued that because higher education was no longer a national growth industry, its budget needed to be paired with measureable outcomes. First, Mayor Giuliani criticized “CUNY for spending too much effort on remedial classes and for graduating too few of its community-college students” (Arenson, 1997, p. 1). To many, “CUNY “[remained] the gateway for tens of thousands of the most disadvantaged, including students living below the poverty line, immigrants who know little or no English and adults working to support their families” (p. 1). However, the Giuliani administration and the newly appointed members of the Board of Trustees believed that the search for a new chancellor would allow for the University to
redirect its mission and begin to recover from decades of bad publicity and a series of scandals related to academic standards and performance. After Ann Reynolds’s departure, Chairman Anne Paolucci and Mayor Giuliani teamed up to find a chancellor who was familiar with CUNY and who could work with the New York political establishment to secure funding for the colleges while reshaping CUNY’s national image (Arenson, 1997, p. B2). Initially, the Board considered four candidates: Allen Sessoms of Queens College, Ira Bloom of Lehman College, Kurt Schmeller of Queensborough Community College, and Edward Volpe of the College of Staten Island (p. B2). Each of these individuals provided the familiarity and experience the Board was looking for to replace Ann Reynolds, an outsider who the Board had come to distrust and who rocked the University with conflict as she focused on her own special interests outside of her role at CUNY.

As Mayor Giuliani campaigned for reelection in 1997, his Democratic opponent Ruth Messinger criticized his plans to increase the admissions standards at CUNY. Although she “backed tough academic standards for City University,” Messinger also suggested that “proposed entrance exams would deny students access to higher education” (Finnegan & Siegel, 1997, p. 7). Mayor Giuliani and CUNY Board of Trustees Vice-Chairman Herman Badillo supported a measure that would implement entrance exams for students applying as freshman to any of the CUNY colleges. Badillo believed that, in order for students to enroll at one of the community colleges, they should be able to test at a 12th grade level in reading, writing, and math (p. 7). Messinger challenged this notion, claiming that CUNY should continue to provide remedial courses to assist students who did not get an adequate high school education, allowing them entry into the colleges so that they would not be barred from working toward a degree. Moreover, she attacked Giuliani’s support of the 1995 tuition hike, claiming that many students at CUNY struggle in college because they are
burdened by financial obligations that serve as barriers to their education. Messinger “proposed making CUNY tuition payments deductible from the city personal tax” (p. 7), a plan that would cost the city $25 million a year. Her higher education economic proposal would be paid for, she stated, by “reducing city aid to large corporations” (Herszenhorn, 1997, p. B3). As the Democratic candidate focused on incentivizing college education and reducing the impact of the financial strain many students felt who enrolled at CUNY, Giuliani and the Board limited their critiques of the system to academic standards. Messinger felt that the Mayor’s attack on low community college graduation rates was short-sighted, believing that “most students work or have family obligations that prolong their studies” (p. 7). Messinger’s plan, however, fell on deaf ears across the city. Although Giuliani did not win by a landslide, his 53% of the vote meant that plans to reform CUNY through a radical change in admissions standards would go forward. Ultimately, the Mayor’s vision to resurrect CUNY would be realized through the appointment of a strong chancellor who aligned with his values of reform and regeneration.

As the search continued for a permanent chancellor, Mayor Giuliani appointed Brooklyn College Provost Christoph Kimmich as Acting Chancellor. At the start of his term, Kimmich was immediately confronted with a proposal from City Council Speaker Peter Vallone who recommended cutting tuition in half for students who maintained at least a B average while enrolled at one of the CUNY colleges (Finnegan, 1998, p. 7). The “proposal would offer a tuition break to about 12,000 CUNY freshmen in the first year and 25,000 freshmen and sophomores each year after that” (p. 7). Critics of the plan in the Giuliani administration argued that recent revelations regarding exam and final grade inflation coupled with persistent low academic standards and graduation rates indicated that scholastic performance at CUNY was heavily
skewed, insisting that Vallone’s plan would complicate the issue even further. At the same time, Giuliani attempted to overpower Vallone’s proposal with an historic proposal of his own. In his State of the City Address that year, Giuliani called CUNY a “disaster” and stated that the University “should end open enrollment and adopt an entrance exam” (Barry, 1998, p. A1) as a way to systematically raise academic standards. To many across the University, the Mayor’s public charge that open admissions was a catastrophic failure signaled a threat to the mission of the University. Brooklyn City Councilwoman Una Clark called Giuliani’s plan “an attack on poor people” while Sandi Cooper, chair of the University Faculty Senate went further stating that the imposition of an entrance exam and the end of open admissions was “cruel and unnecessary punishment” on students (Sorenson & Wasserman, 1998, p. 32).

The mayor’s plan represented a complete overhaul of the vision and mission of CUNY. Alongside Herman Badillo, Mayor Giuliani recommended that students entering one of the University’s six community colleges be held to much tougher academic standards, proving they had mastered basic reading, writing, and math skills at the twelfth-grade level. Under the open admissions policy, students entering the community college sector at CUNY were only required to have a high school degree or its equivalency and would be placed into remedial classes if they required additional skill-building. Many believed that this policy would “foreclose a principal avenue by which new immigrants and disadvantaged students [could] better themselves and gain entry into the workforce (New York Times, 1998, p. A16). In addition to eliminating open access to the community college sector at CUNY, the Mayor also proposed privatizing the remedial track of the two-year colleges, removing these programs from the public expense account, and suggested that the entire developmental infrastructure be turned over to new management as a way to remedy low
graduation rates and eroding academic standards (Lombardi, Rein, & Finnegan, 1998, p. 28). To many at CUNY, Giuliani’s proposal threatened the mission of the community colleges “in educating the most disadvantaged” and misunderstood the “difficulty of the task” (Arenson, 1998, p. B7). Interim Chancellor Kimmich approached the Mayor’s claims with a diplomatic tone that was far more palatable to the university community. Kimmich stated that CUNY administrators were willing to work with the Giuliani administration on recalibrating the academic standards for community college entrants but firmly believed that the continuity of open admissions be central to any revisions to the academic structure (p. B7). With the resolution already in place to severely limit remedial coursework at the senior colleges, Giuliani’s effort then focused on creating a sub-collegiate adjunct to the community colleges where remedial coursework would be provided by a third party and would be offset from traditional academic life at CUNY.

Under Giuliani’s proposal on remediation, the number of students eligible to enroll in one of the six community colleges could decrease by 75% if the private sector was to absorb responsibility for developmental education. The Mayor remarked that the majority of community college students presently enrolled at CUNY “should not have been admitted because they were unprepared for college work” (Levy, 1998, p. B1). Although Mayor Giuliani and his administration ramped up their rhetorical attacks on the CUNY system, administrators also recognized that the mayor had little power to substantiate change unless such measures were approved both by Albany and the Board of Trustees. Under a shared funding equation developed in the 1970s as a response to the fiscal crisis in the city, Albany held significant financial responsibility for the senior colleges while City Hall picked up 20%-30% of the community college budget (p. B1). Accordingly, tuition and fees filled in the gaps for the remainder of the
community college balance sheet. As one of his only sources of power over CUNY, Mayor Giuliani proposed to divide the city’s contribution to the CUNY community colleges between the campuses and private remedial agencies responsible for providing developmental education for students who did not reach the cut scores on proposed entrance examinations. Mayor Giuliani remarked that if CUNY did not comply with the proposal, he would withhold funding from the community colleges entirely (p. B1).

By February 1998, CUNY reported that it was implementing stricter admissions standards at several of its flagship senior colleges. On campuses such as Baruch and Queens, admissions requirements now mandated that students sit for and report scores on the SAT and take additional college preparatory courses in high school. Entering students at Baruch were also required to have taken at least 10 New York State Regents-level courses in 1998 and have completed a rigorous series of preparatory courses in math and English. In years prior, students were only required to have earned an 80% average in their college prep courses and were not required to take the SAT (Arenson, 1998, p. 23). Some critics argued that the move to increase standards at the senior colleges was a public relations campaign and “part of a nationwide trend by colleges more concerned with their reputations than with educating less-prepared students” (p. 23). However, Baruch College President Matthew Goldstein argued that “this is really nothing more than aligning our students with our expectations” (p. 23). Goldstein believed that enhancing the rigor of the curriculum implied that students entering Baruch be prepared to meet the challenges of those standards in the freshman year, reducing the probability that they would dropout along the way.
At the same time the University implemented multiple measures to recreate its reputation and strengthen its academic standing nationally, the central administration recognized that Mayor Giuliani’s proposal to eliminate remedial education from the community colleges would erase a substantial funding base from its bottom line. Interim Chancellor Kimmich remarked that “a precipitous reduction in the number of students could have a really devastating effect on the whole university” (Arenson, 1998, p. 35). A complete removal of all developmental programs from the community colleges would be equal to a 14% reduction in the total number of classes offered by the two-year institutions. Moreover, it would disallow 33% of the University’s 65,000 students from taking classes until they completed remedial coursework elsewhere, leaving CUNY in a financial drought (p. 35). Queensborough Community College President Kurt Schmeller argued that “the remedial courses help offset our higher-cost programs” (p. 35). Under Mayor Giuliani’s plan, CUNY would not only lose money off the bottom line from a withdrawal of tuition dollars, it would also not receive much-needed federal and state aid funding for students enrolled in remedial courses who are offered the same financial aid plans as students who are considered non-remedial (p. 35). Interim Chancellor Kimmich, rather than bowing to the Mayor’s plan entirely, recommended that faculty and administrators on the campuses begin to understand why students who enroll in community colleges ultimately do not succeed and graduate (p. 35).

The faculty responded to Giuliani’s harsh critiques of the University with an argument that the composition of their labor force prevented an overhaul of academic standards. By 1998, nearly 60% of the faculty at CUNY was comprised of part-time, or adjunct faculty who often were instructors on multiple campuses (Arenson, 1998, p. B5). During the early part of the decade “budget reductions and early retirement programs reduced the number of full-time professors, so
more and more adjunct teachers, many lacking Ph.D.’s, [carried] the course load” (p. B5). The percentage of adjunct faculty teaching at the senior colleges rose by 12% over an eight-year period since 1990. Moreover, 68% of the faculty at the community college were listed as part-time (p. B5). Although many faculty remarked that instructors of adjunct rank provided excellent education for students, the lack of stability related to low salaries, few benefits, and the need to piece together a teaching schedule at multiple campuses brought little in the way of needed stability within the academic departments. With Mayor Giuliani’s continual upbraiding of the CUNY culture of remediation, the faculty attempted to shift the conversation to one of resources. Without adequate stability in the faculty ranks, they argued, students on the campuses would receive an inconsistent education with standards that shifted from instructor to instructor. Academic integrity would remain obscure until the University was able to invest in hiring additional tenure-track faculty.

By the spring semester, the Mayor’s proposals began to emerge as policy. In March, the Board of Trustees debated on measures to remove remediation from all of the colleges, requiring students who failed one or more of the placement exams to complete developmental coursework in the summer or attend remedial centers set up and managed by the University (Arenson, 1998, p. 1). The proposed restructuring of admissions protocol also required that all students complete remedial coursework within one year of entering the University or else they could not remain as matriculated, degree-seeking students in any of the colleges, including the two-year institutions. The plan, designed by Interim Chancellor Kimmich, “would represent one of the most aggressive efforts by any public university in the nation to deal with the chronic problem of underprepared students” (p. 1). As debates continued in meetings of the Board of Trustees, it was recommended
that: 1) all recent high school graduates be required to report SAT scores, 2) foreign high school graduates submit scores from an English as a Second Language Exam, 3) and all remedial courses be completed within one year of entry. Further resolutions during the early weeks of March attempted to restrict some of these provisions even further. A subsequent layer of policy recommendations limited remediation to one semester and barred “students from entering the senior colleges if they had not passed all three of CUNY’s placement tests” (Arenson, 1998, p. B3). In response to the radical shifts in admissions policy, Edison Jackson, President of Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn stated “this policy would work well for the fittest of our society, but the poorest, most disadvantaged of our society would be most negatively impacted” (p. B3). President Jackson expressed a view held by a contingent of faculty, many of whom spoke critically against the proposed resolution. Believing that the new mandate would “effectively bar students from the colleges” (Arenson, 1998, p. B6), faculty pushed the Board of Trustees to postpone their vote until other alternatives could be considered. Many board members opposed the delay sought by the author of the admissions plan, John Calandra. Members of the CUNY community rallied together in response to what banner headlines read as “an assault on open admissions” (New York Times, 1998, p. A20). Faculty, students, and CUNY traditionalists believed that the board’s rash response to Mayor Giuliani’s assaults on the University were being “sloppily handled” at the expense of “minorities, immigrants, and the poor” (p. A20). By the end of March, after several days delay in the voting process, the CUNY Board of Trustees “narrowly failed to pass a resolution” (Arenson, 1998, p. B7) to radically alter the protocol for admissions and all but abolish remedial education on the campuses. By the time the issue reached the Board, the resolution focused on allowing individual colleges to remove remedial education from their course catalogues if they wished, rather than the comprehensive plan to abolish remediation institution-wide. The
final resolution zeroed in on Baruch College, whose President Matthew Goldstein wished to eliminate developmental skills courses on his campus. The vote signaled to the University community that it was not entirely ready to throw in the towel on remediation, angering many who had been fighting to raise CUNY’s national image. Reports issued by two conservative think tanks, the Empire Foundation for Policy Research and the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, argued that CUNY was “denying their students a proper academic grounding by not requiring core courses in basic” (Arenson, 1998, p. 35) subject areas. The reports also accused the University of watering down its curriculum through the proliferation of remedial courses and of grade inflation to allow unprepared students to move through at artificially high rates. Mayor Giuliani “said the report was valuable and that it offered one more illustration of the university’s failure to set appropriate standards” (p. 35). However, even the most staunch reformers at CUNY including Baruch’s President Matthew Goldstein believed that the report went too far, conflating academic standards with a certain roster of courses. Goldstein and University Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Louise Mirrer responded to the reports, stating that the findings reflected an inaccurate understanding of academic principles in suggesting that if students were required to take a prescribed core curriculum then standards would improve. The reports believed that students had far too much discretion in which courses they took that led to an erosion of academic competency. As the spring semester carried on, Mayor Giuliani’s attacks on the University became far more pointed and in many ways signaled that his desire was to act as chancellor rather than mayor. In addition to his ongoing insistence that remediation be eliminated at CUNY, Giuliani also concerned himself with the University’s attendance policies. In an April 1998 budget speech, Giuliani threatened CUNY with an ultimatum: “take attendance at classes or lose $110 million in city money for community colleges” (Archibold, 1998, p. B4). Giuliani exclaimed that
taking attendance would allow administrators and faculty to “see what the heck you are doing for the $110 million of city money” citing that “I know what you’re not doing. You’re not graduating anybody” (p. B4). Although the mayor’s proposal to require CUNY to account for student attendance could not be implemented without the vote of the council, his allegations raised considerable interest in understanding the relationship between the fiscal health of the University and trends in student attendance, particularly where financial aid was concerned. And as Mayor Giuliani continued his microscopic analysis of the University’s daily operations, he extended another surprise to senior administrators just as commencement exercises were underway at the end of the spring term.

On May 6, 1998, Mayor Giuliani appointed a taskforce to examine CUNY’s operational infrastructure and make recommendations for reform. The seven-member taskforce was led by Benno Schmidt, former president of Yale University. Mayor Giuliani “directed members to immediately hire an accounting firm to review how CUNY spends its budget of more than $400 million a year” (Lombardi, 1998, p. 22). Central to the investigation was how the policies on open admissions were impacting student performance and fiscal operations at CUNY. Furthermore, the taskforce was to address the issue of remediation and examine the effectiveness of developmental skills programs which, a day before, the Board of Trustees voted in committee to retain after months of debate regarding the mayor’s insistence they be eliminated (p. 22). However, a formal proposal to end remediation entirely at the four-year colleges was scheduled to go to vote at the full Board of Trustees meeting on May 26. The vote was not secured, though, even though the majority of members on the board were appointed by either Governor Pataki or Mayor Giuliani. Recognizing that the critical vote required a strong political foundation of Pataki/Giuliani
supporters, the governor sought to quickly move to replace the expired term of Susan Mounier of Staten Island who was appointed by Governor Cuomo. If the state senate could confirm Ms. Mounier in time for the May 26 vote, Governor Pataki was assured that the final blow to remediation at the four-year colleges could be dealt (Arenson, 1998, p. B1). Just before the vote, CUNY issued a report stating that it would “lose more than half of [its] entering students if the university decided to prevent students who did not pass placement tests from enrolling in the four-year colleges” (Arenson, 1998, p. B6). It suggested that 55% of Hispanic students, 51% of Asian students, 46% of Black students, and 38% of White students would be barred from entering if the policy proposal was affirmed. Vice Chairman Herman Badillo countered the report’s analysis stating that it was “worse-case scenario” (p. B6) and blamed its catastrophic findings on Chancellor Kimmich’s lack of support for the measure.

By the May 26 Board of Trustees meeting, however, CUNY trustees initially predicted that the vote was not going to have enough support for passage. Chairwoman Anne Paolucci remarked that “we don’t seem to be ready for it” (Arenson, 1998, p. B3) despite strong insistence from the Giuliani administration that a vote be held. However, board members surprised an extremely vocal audience of supporters of remediation by continuing with the vote despite the unpredictable outcome. The trustees voted 9 to 6 in favor of phasing out remediation at the senior colleges entirely by September 1999. In a famous description of the policy shift, Trustee James Murphy likened the change in remediation to a “meat cleaver” and suggested that the plan was “radical surgery on the mission and role of City University and New York City” (Edelman & Neuman, 1998, p. 012). In an extraordinary victory for his administration, Giuliani stated that the vote “should be applauded by CUNY students and prospective students, who will now begin to receive
a more rewarding and valuable college education” (p. 012). With the search of a new chancellor still underway, it was clear that the political establishment in Albany and City Hall were strongly in favor of a leader for CUNY who would be responsible for continuing to reshape CUNY’s national image and lead the campuses in eliminating remediation from the curriculum. At the conclusion of the 1997-1998 academic year, word began to spread that Baruch President Matthew Goldstein was a favorite to become chancellor. However, it seemed that CUNY might lose out on the opportunity to recruit Goldstein for the position as he had just accepted the role as president of Adelphi College on nearby Long Island. It was clear, though, that the contents of the Schmidt taskforce would set the tone for the subsequent academic year as the Board of Trustees hoped to find a Chancellor who could erase the stained image left by W. Ann Reynolds.

1998-1999 Academic Year

Enrollment & Completion

Total enrollment at CUNY declined by 3,800 students in the 1998-1999 academic year. Enrollment at the four top-tier senior colleges (Baruch, Brooklyn, Hunter, and City) declined by 1,144 students. At Baruch, full-time enrollment increased slightly, Brooklyn and City experienced noticeable declines while Hunter College’s enrollment remained flat. Community college enrollment also declined, but more modestly than did the senior colleges. With only a few exceptions, almost every campus saw an erosion of the student body over the previous year, an effect that could possibly be related to the radical alterations in admissions standards voted on the previous year.
Table 2.5: Total Undergraduate University Enrollment by College, 1998-1999

Source: http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/

Although the racial makeup of the university remained largely the same over the previous year, the implemented and predicted alterations to the admissions standards and remedial status would inevitably restructure the demographics of the University.
At Hostos Community College, over 65% of students were considered non-proficient in all three subject areas upon entry in 1998. Moreover, Hostos’s student population was comprised of over 78% Hispanic students, many of whom were bilingual. The proficiency examination scandal the previous year signaled that not only were non-native English speaking Hispanic students going to have to rely on the community college to provide them with the necessary language skills to enroll in credit-bearing coursework and ultimately be able to graduate but also that the proficiency exams were going to serve as a critical checkpoint between students of color and the senior colleges. Under Mayor Giuliani’s plans for CUNY, the elimination of remediation at the senior colleges as well as at the community colleges would move the starting line much further for non-White, non-native English speaking students. The implications of moving remediation out of the senior colleges implied that, over time, the percentage of students of color eligible for entry would decline. If Mayor Giuliani’s plan to eliminate remediation from the University entirely and reroute...
developmental education through a third-party system, a substantial portion of the student body at the community colleges would be eliminated. The community college system disproportionately enrolled higher percentages of students of color prior to the changes in the remedial and admissions policies. If further, stricter polices were implemented, the mission of access that the open admissions period enacted would be stripped from the University, blocking students of color from opportunity in the city’s higher education system.

The initial, but drastic, shifts to admissions protocol and remedial education policies the preceding year altered the academic profile of entering students at the senior colleges. Many students who would have otherwise been accepted to one of the senior colleges were barred from admission under the new standards.

Table 2.7: Remedial Status of Entering Students at CUNY Senior Colleges, 1998

![Bar chart showing remedial status of entering students at CUNY senior colleges, 1998.](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)

Source: [http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)
There was a substantial shift in the percentage of triple remedial students at the senior colleges between the 1997 and 1998 academic years. At the top-tier senior colleges, the number of students requiring developmental education dropped to near zero while the second-tier colleges like York, Staten Island, and John Jay retained some triple remedial students. Remedial enrollment at the community colleges largely remained the same between the two academic years, a reflection of the board’s unwillingness to concede to Mayor Giuliani’s plan in its entirety. However, as additional alterations were made to remedial education at CUNY in the coming years, a noticeable difference would emerge in the demographics of race and social class in the community and senior colleges.
The Battle for Remediation Continues

Just before the academic year got underway at CUNY, the Board of Trustees and central administration were hit with an injunction that blocked the University from removing remediation from the senior colleges as planned in 1999. New York State Supreme Court Justice Elliott Wilk ordered CUNY to suspend all plans to eliminate remediation because the Board of Trustees failed to follow the open meeting laws of the state, neglecting to give the public accurate information regarding the May 26 vote. Wilk also reprimanded the board for hosting the meeting in a room too small to accommodate those parties who might have been interested in attending (Wasserman & Moritz, 1998, p. 16). His decision remarked that “chairwoman Anne Paolucci misled ‘interested members’ when she announced no vote would be taken” (p. 16). Although board members quickly responded, stating that they planned to appeal the decision, it was clear that if the injunction held, the trustees would be compelled to vote on the remediation issue again, leaving the widely celebrated victory in balance. Mayor Giuliani’s administration called the judge’s decision “ludicrous” and scolded him for playing politics from the bench. However, Justice Wilk stated in his ruling “that he believed there was a strong likelihood that the May 26, 1998, resolution [would] be voided at trial” (Arenson, 1998, p. B3), forcing the University to either reconsider its approach or take the risk of inviting the public in and holding a new vote. Chairwoman Paolucci and members of the CUNY senior administration filed for a stay of the injunction, hoping that, if granted, would afford them enough time to continue developing the policies required for the proposal’s implementation the following year. Justice Wilk strongly asserted that the University was ill-prepared to provide sufficient alternatives to remediation for the two-thirds of students who would ordinarily require at least some developmental education upon entry to the senior colleges.
In response, the University argued that it was preparing summer intensives that would provide eligible students with an opportunity to complete remedial coursework prior to the start of the fall term.

A few days later, CUNY was faced with an additional political entanglement that threatened to upend the remedial plan. The New York State Department of Education and the Board of Regents both maintained that they had oversight over any substantive changes to the educational structure of the City University. They argued that “they have both the right and the responsibility to review any changes that affect admissions policies at the state’s public universities” (Arenson, 1998, p. B1). However, CUNY Interim Chancellor Kimmich and Chairwoman Paolucci responded, stating that any proposed oversight or review was “an unnecessary and inappropriate incursion into the right of the Board of Trustees to operate the City University of New York as set forth in the education law in New York” (p. B1). Although both agencies promised a quick review of the remedial policy from the May 26 vote, it was unclear to CUNY brass how either body would vote on the issue, making the implementation of any protocol tenuous. The Deputy Commissioner for Higher Education, Gerald Patton, stated, “when an institution changes or alters its mission in any substantive ways, it is required to get prior approval from the Board of Regents” (p. B1). Because the new remedial policy would require an overhaul and rewrite of the CUNY Master Plan, the governing bodies in Albany believed that the alteration was significant enough to require vetting and oversight.

Recognizing a potential problem, Governor George Pataki questioned the validity of agency oversight. In conjunction with the Giuliani administration, Albany believed that both groups were
taking a far too heavy-handed approach, one that further politicized the process and opened the proposal up for failure before implementation. Initially, the Board of Regents and the Department of Education asked CUNY to “document how it would shift staff, money, facilities and faculty contracts to meet the new demand at the community colleges” (Staples, 1998, p. A16) for remedial classes. Critics recognized that the demographic shift of Black and Latino students to the community colleges would create an academic climate where extensive resources would be needed to ensure that students did not dropout during the remedial process and were offered comparable supports as they were able to access at the senior colleges. Additional criticism emerged from the New York State Comptroller’s office who argued that higher education policy in the state was “haphazard and often politically influenced” (Arenson, 1998, p. B6). Comptroller H. Carl McCall charged the Governor and the Mayor for using the boards of both public higher education systems as extensions of their own political agendas, appointing board members who would represent interest particular to each administration. McCall called for reform in how trustees were appointed. He argued that “university trustees not be employed by the politicians who appoint them” (p. B6), pointing specifically to Mayor Giuliani who appointed two trustees to the CUNY board who also are paid city employees. Moreover, the report mentioned that trustees should be disconnected from party politics in either the state or the city, allowing each member to act as an independent auditor of the university and unprovoked by directives sent down from Albany and City Hall. Lastly, McCall argued for a focus on broad access to state public higher education, citing fear that the newly instituted remedial policies would limit the ability of many students to attend a CUNY or SUNY college. In summary, McCall’s report asserted that the place CUNY specifically occupied between the city and the state in the budget process left the University open to constant attack and change based on the climate of fiscal politics between the Mayor and the Governor.
Most importantly, though, was the Comptroller’s analysis that indicated that New York State spent only $157 per capita on higher education, 15% less than the national average, and relied almost solely on student tuition dollars to cover the remainder of the budget (p. B6). The message concluded that CUNY’s mission was in direct conflict with the proposals being forced onto the colleges by a team of politicians who hoped to increase the prestige of the University.

In November, James Traub, author of *City on a Hill: Testing the American Dream at City College*, offered a scathing critique in the *New York Times* of Queens College President Allen Sessoms. Traub accused Sessoms of bowing to the external influences he believed were attempting to increase the national reputation of CUNY at the expense of its commitment to open admissions. Sessoms proposed to merge Queens College with Queensborough Community College, creating a comprehensive institution that would range from two-year degrees to doctoral programs. Although the proposal was quickly dismissed by senior administrators, Traub underscored its significance. He stated, “Mr. Sessoms is a symbol of the changes being thrust upon the CUNY colleges from the outside” (Traub, 1998, p. 13). Unlike Herman Badillo who believed that CUNY faculty liked to maintain a silent status quo, Traub argued that Sessoms was the servant of a new paradigm where students were viewed as “incapable” and image trumped substance in the game of national higher education politics (p. 13). President Sessoms believed that the problem with students at CUNY lay “not with the teachers and administrators, but with the larger social unwillingness to demand achievement and to stigmatize failure” (p. 13). Echoing the sentiments of Mayor Giuliani, President Sessoms noted the public’s fatigue and dismay with a history of failure at CUNY. He pointed to the sustained budget cuts over several decades as evidence that the taxpayers, the state, and the city were tired of supporting a University that failed to keep its promises of access and
opportunity. As part of his goal to raise academic standards at Queens College, Sessoms made the SAT’s mandatory for incoming freshmen prior to the Board of Trustees’s proposal, increased the minimum GPA required for entry, and ratcheted up the number of college preparatory credits needed by each student (p. 13). Although President Sessoms was unsuccessful in his attempt to merge the community and senior college in the borough of Queens, his efforts to do so signaled to many CUNY traditionalists that a new wave of administrative ideology was emerging on the campuses. Under orders from Giuliani and Pataki, an ethos of competition and prestige were beginning to overshadow the history of open admissions. For critics like Traub, this possibility represented a clear threat to the type of access typically granted at CUNY.

In November, the CUNY Board of Trustees voted unanimously to institute a University-wide standardized writing examination that students must successfully complete prior to entering their junior year. In an obvious nod to the Giuliani administration’s demand for increased academic rigor on the campuses, the board eliminated the possibility of students graduating who did not pass the exam. Just a month later, a report from the Ford Foundation challenged CUNY’s push to increase academic standards by eliminating remediation and raising reliance on high-stakes examinations. The report argued that remediation was a “core function of higher education” and suggested that “the economic and social costs of not providing remedial education [were] high since so many jobs [required] skills in reading, writing, and mathematics” (Arenson, 1998, p. B14). Although the report did not provide a case study of CUNY specifically, the tenor of the piece and the analysis of the principle academic and social functions of remediation drew accurate comparisons to CUNY’s mission. The Ford Foundation’s report noted that remedial courses were financially inexpensive to offer and beneficial to students because their previous education had
been subpar and had not included college preparatory material. The findings concluded that until such time as there was significant overhaul of the secondary education system, remedial courses should remain a necessary and responsible component of higher education (p. B14).

At the end of the fall semester, the university was faced with additional legal opposition to the plan to eliminate remediation. Six civil liberties unions filed a lawsuit with the State Supreme Court of New York claiming that the University failed to follow protocol when it did not notify the Board of Regents that it planned to restructure remedial programs. The lawsuit was organized and ultimately filed by College of Staten Island Professor and former University Faculty Senate Chair, Sandi Cooper. With severe backlash coming from civil liberties groups and a strong contingent of the CUNY faculty, the central administration and the Board of Trustees faced an uphill battle as they prepared to bypass outstanding judicial decisions and raise the issue of the new remedial policy in the January 1999 board meeting in preparation for a new vote (Arenson, 1999, p. B4). However, members of the board publicly announced that they believed the vote would pass, even with new opposition facing the architects of the policy and the Giuliani administration. Vice-Chairman Herman Badillo stated that in order to fulfill the board’s obligations to the state’s open meetings law, it would “hold the meeting in a very large place where there will be no objection” (p. B4). Moreover, lawyers would be on hand to provide legal counsel to Chairwoman Paolucci on procedural protocol regarding the vote. On January 26 the Board of Trustees voted 10-5 to eliminate remedial classes in a raucous meeting filled with supporters and protesters alike. The new policy would be phased in over three years and would begin at Baruch, Queens, Hunter, and Brooklyn Colleges (Gendar, 1999, p. 26).
An Institution Adrift

In May 1998, Mayor Giuliani appointed former Yale University President and director of the for-profit Edison Project school network, Benno Schmidt to lead a taskforce charged with evaluating the effectiveness of CUNY both academically and operationally. Schmidt was also tasked with formulating a “new blueprint to dramatically change” (Arenson, 1998, p. 29) the direction of the university. The taskforce was largely comprised of individuals who shared the mayor’s views on CUNY, leaving many faculty questioning whether the panel was convened as a political maneuver to force CUNY’s hand in altering key pieces of its mission. Although Schmidt attempted to allay the concerns of the faculty, he stated “I think the time is ripe for CUNY to ask itself what it wants to be for the next several decades” (p. 29). He did however, recognize that, because of its complicated history, CUNY acted both as a zone of opportunity and an academic barrier for the students it primarily served. Mayor Giuliani gave Schmidt six months to provide a comprehensive analysis of the functionality and outcomes of the CUNY system. By August, the taskforce had met nine times, initiating conversations “separately with the presidents and deans of CUNY’s undergraduate colleges and graduate programs, as well as the interim chancellor, Christoph M. Kimmich, and staff and many of the trustees” (p. 26). Along with the appointed members of the taskforce, Schmidt hired a team of consultants from the Rand Corporation and PricewaterhouseCoopers to conduct a thorough and impartial analysis of the financial, governance, and academic mechanisms of the university, a process that cost close to $500,000 (p. 26). Although the taskforce was designed to empirically inquire into the functionality of the university, Schmidt entered into the task with a set of predetermined key operating principles. He believed that CUNY was not complicit in providing a low-caliber education to its students but argued that
by raising its standards it could encourage its students to achieve even greater possibilities for themselves. He also stated that he valued “higher education as a source of opportunity, in the value of competition from businesses in education, and in the need to set standards that can be clearly measured” (p. 26). Most importantly, though, the taskforce recognized that any substantial change at CUNY would be difficult to attain and that a full commitment of the central administration would be necessary in order for standards to rebound.

The taskforce held its first public hearing on January 5, 1999. The taskforce organized itself as a panel, opening its members up to questions from “defenders of CUNY and its mission” (Arenson, 1999, p. B8). Among those in the audience were political heavyweights in New York City who attended in order to advocate for the preservation of CUNY’s mission. Former New York City Mayor David Dinkins “said he was saddened by the attacks on CUNY and the question about the university’s standards, and that he feared they were nothing more than thinly veiled criticisms of the students on campuses today” (p. B8). In the same vein, New York State Senator Franz Leichter challenged the newly adopted policy on remediation, calling it a Trojan Horse and argued instead that CUNY desperately needed additional resources from the city and the state in order to provide quality education to underprepared young people. Others in the audience praised the taskforce for its investigation, one member noting that CUNY had grown beyond its capacity to provide sufficient academic programs and that in order to succeed at its mission, must trim down the number of students allowed entry (p. B8).

Not long after the taskforce held its public hearing, it was clear that not only did CUNY require substantive overhaul but that there was a growing crisis in leadership that had to be addressed
before any policy change could be made. By March 1999, five of the seventeen campuses were without a president and a permanent chancellor to replace Ann Reynolds had yet to be found. Although “CUNY [continued] to function despite all these openings, there [was] a pervasive sense of crisis and lost opportunity as the university [awaited] a report from the task force” (Arenson, 1999, p. B1). As a result of the vacancies in senior administrative posts across the campuses, key functions like strategic planning, budget preparation, and faculty hiring had virtually come to a slow, grinding halt (p. B1). Integral to the university’s inability to hire college presidents was the long-term lack of a permanent chancellor, signaling to many who might otherwise apply for a presidency position that the university was unstable and in a period of tumultuous transition, a setting many dared not enter. Although many legislative officials and members of the CUNY community praised interim Chancellor Kimmich for effectively leading the university through the rocky transition, those same individuals recognized that Kimmich and his chancellery were “caretakers” who would be leaving the central office as soon as a new chancellor was appointed (p. B1). In turn, it was noted that “the gap in leadership has empowered the worst aspects of the trustees, who are trying to micromanage the university” in the absence of a chancellor (p. B1).

Ultimately, it was clear to those most impacted by the instability at the top-tier of the university’s administration that there would be no permanent chancellor appointed until the coming summer when Governor Pataki had the opportunity to appoint new members to the Board of Trustees who he believed would certify the candidate of his choice.

But before summer could arrive, the university community would be dealt another blow that would further destabilize the already foundationless institution. In late May, Board of Trustees Chairwoman Anne Paolucci, the individual chiefly responsible for the downfall of Chancellor
Reynolds, announced that she would be resigning from her position on June 1 of that year. With only a week’s notice, Paolucci unexpectedly threw the stability of the board into jeopardy. The outgoing chairwoman stated “that we are entering a new phase in the restructuring of CUNY and that a new chair should be in place for that purpose” (Arenson, 1999, p. B1). Almost immediately, major New York City media outlets began speculating that with Paolucci out, the chancellorship might be given to Benno Schmidt who was said to have “the savvy of an insider with the objectivity of an outsider” (Daily News, 1999, p. 54). It was true that the chess board was being reset and that Schmidt was a top consideration to hold an important administrative role at CUNY. Alongside Schmidt, attention was now being seriously given to former Baruch College President Matthew Goldstein who had left CUNY only recently to become the president of Adelphi University (p. 54). However, almost immediately after Paolucci announced her resignation, Governor Pataki named Board of Trustees Vice-Chairman Herman Badillo as newly appointed chairman of the board (Topousis, 1999, p. 002). Herman Badillo’s appointment as chairman of the Board of Trustees signaled to many that the post of chancellor was being readied for Schmidt. It was reported that “Badillo’s dogged determination to bring accountability and standards to the system, coupled with Schmidt’s academic cachet, hold out hope that CUNY [could] be restored to its proper place at the pinnacle of higher education” (Daily News, 1999, p. 36). Both Badillo and Mayor Giuliani were working behind the scenes to encourage Schmidt to take the job as chancellor. Chairman Badillo remarked that “CUNY [needed] as chancellor a personality who [would] restore high standards” (Finnegan & Gendar, 1999, p. 4). Although City Hall and Albany hedged their bets that Badillo could wrangle Schmidt into becoming CUNY’s next chancellor, it was clear by June that the ex-Yale president was not interested in taking the job (Gendar & Finnegan, 1999, p. 45). Schmidt acknowledged that he had a vested interest in CUNY’s long-term reform initiatives
but that he was not entirely ready to walk away from his role at the Edison Project. However, it was clear by June 5, 1999 when the taskforce that he headed released its report that Schmidt’s role at CUNY was solidified, perhaps ensuring him a place on the Board of Trustees.

The report titled *The City University of New York: An Institution Adrift* was released to an anxious audience in early June. It was the type of scorched earth analysis that Mayor Giuliani had been looking for and failed to receive from either Ann Reynolds or Chairwoman Paolucci. In the report, the taskforce called for “a total restructuring of the university” (Arenson, 1999, p. 1). The central argument that spanned throughout the analysis focused on the preservation of CUNY’s historic mission of providing full access to New York City students but that the University should instead plan for full centralization in order to support consistent and rigorous academic standards for its 200,000 students (p. 1). Schmidt remarked that “the word chaotic doesn’t even begin to describe [the university]; it is moribund” (p. 1). Although the report offered a scathing critique of a university with a history of low-expectations and unparalleled mismanagement, it did acknowledge that the entire educational enterprise in New York City was to blame for the erosion of academic standards.

The report offers a comprehensive analysis of the operating structures across the CUNY system but provides several key recommendations as a blueprint for the new chancellor:

1. State and city funding for remedial services should increase so that students would not have to use their financial aid to pay for zero-credit courses

2. CUNY should only offer remedial courses at the community college level
3. The university should create flagship colleges that could compete with other major universities nationally

4. CUNY must develop a closer partnership with the New York City public schools in order to raise academic preparedness, outcomes, and graduation rates (p. 1).

Members of the CUNY community immediately responded to the report. One member of the University Faculty Senate remarked that “there are pockets of excellence all over the place” and in the report “the innocent and the guilty alike get swept away” (Haberman, 1999, p. 021). For example, the SEEK program had maintained its stature as one of the university’s central points of access for students of color. Many faculty remarked that the report reflected a particular political position articulated by Mayor Giuliani and failed to live up to its promise of being an objective empirical analysis of the systems of the university. Interim Chancellor Kimmich set the tone for his administration, noting that the outcome of the report would be determined by how its recommendations would be put to use (Arenson, 1999, p. B1). Brooklyn College Professor of Political Science Michael Kahan remarked that “we’re not dealing here with intellectuals; we’re dealing with a group of people who have a political agenda” (p. B1). While many agreed with the positions outlined in Schmidt’s report that advocated for an increased use in technology across the campuses along with greater financial accountability and management, many suggested that the report failed to acknowledge that integral to CUNY’s success is the continuity of strong state and local aid, aid which had been rapidly eroding since the 1970s. Between 1995 and 1999 state aid to CUNY had been cut by $50 million (Gendar & Finnegan, 1999, p. 6). Moreover, many members of the CUNY community expressed dismay with the recommendation that CUNY be further centralized under the control of a strong chancellor, a position they believed would usurp the power
of the faculty (p. B1). With the report in his back pocket and each of his positions now defined in writing by Benno Schmidt and his colleagues, Mayor Giuliani believed that he could now move forward with increased credibility regarding the situation at CUNY. His next move was to ensure that a strong chancellor was appointed who could implement the central recommendations of the report.

Just after the report from his taskforce was released, Benno Schmidt declined the position of Chancellor of the City University of New York, instead accepting a role on its Board of Trustees (Tully, 1999, p. 6). As newly appointed Vice-Chairman of the board, Schmidt was now positioned to work with the yet-to-be-named chancellor and Herman Badillo on the implementation of Giuliani’s desired reforms for CUNY. Over the summer, the board would agree on who would be best to next lead the City University through its period of overhaul and restructuring. At the start of the new academic year, CUNY would name former Baruch College President and graduate of City College Matthew Goldstein as Chancellor, a figure who would lead the university into the 21st century and reestablish the campuses as premier educational institutions.
1999-2000 Academic Year

Enrollment & Completion

From 1998-2003 there is a gap in recordkeeping of CUNY student data. As a result, there is only modest availability of very basic enrollment data. More detailed indicators like remedial and graduation status are unavailable. The available data show that between the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 academic years, total university undergraduate enrollment declined by 3,862 students. The most significant declines occurred in the top-tier senior colleges like Brooklyn and City. Although the community colleges demonstrated modest declines in enrollment, it was clear that recent shifts in remedial policies had served to reduce the number of students accepted to the four-year institutions.

Table 2.9: Total Undegraduate University Enrollment by College, 1999-2000

![Bar Chart](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)

Source: [http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)

The alterations to the university’s remedial policies, however, created noticeable changes to the racial makeup of the senior colleges. Between the two academic years, the senior colleges each
experienced a loss in students of color while the community colleges showed little change. At Baruch College, the percentage of Black students enrolled decreased by 2.3% while the percentage of White students increased by 3.3%. A similar pattern emerged at City College which noticed a 4.3% increase in White students alongside a 2.3% decrease in Black students and a 2.4% decrease in Hispanic students. Lehman College in the Bronx, however, showed the most significant shift. Between the two years, the percentage of White students jumped by 5.8% while the percentage of Black students decreased by 2.4% and Hispanic enrollment shifted downward by 3.7%.

Table 2.10: Difference in Percentage of Enrolled Students by Race between 1998 and 1999

Source: [http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/](http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/)
Although the changes to remedial policies at CUNY were far too new to generate statistical causal inference between the changes in racial demographics and admissions standards, the first year of the radically different guidelines did bring with it the beginning of a possible demographic trend. White students fared well with the newly adopted standards, particularly in the top-tier senior colleges. Hispanic students fared the worst in terms of the overall decline in enrollment. Over the next several years, this trend would continue. White students would again become the majority in many of the senior colleges while the community colleges would emerge as the tier of the university that would house a predominately Black and Hispanic population. As CUNY prepared for the turn of the century, its newly appointed Chancellor Matthew Goldstein began his tenure with an agenda designed to address the key recommendations in the Schmidt report and to redirect CUNY’s mission toward one of high academic standards and a more prominent national reputation.

From Remediation to Rebranding: Goldstein Leads CUNY Into the 21st Century

As the last academic year of the 20th century opened at CUNY, eyes were on the future as newly appointed Chancellor Matthew Goldstein took command over the central administration and the network of campuses. At the first meeting of the Board of Trustees’s academic affairs committee, a resolution was passed requiring all students applying to a baccalaureate program to submit scores from either the SAT or the ACT. This marked a significant change in university policy, which previously had used its own entrance examinations as sole indicators for where in the university a student was to be enrolled. However, “when the university began to place added burdens on the placement exams, officials and faculty members recognized that they were asking the tests to serve purposes for which they were not created” (Arenson, 1999, p. B4). The CUNY examinations were
originally designed to assess a student’s remedial needs upon entry, a policy developed early in the open admissions era, but not to evaluate an individual’s scholastic aptitude. The committee also determined that a national examination also needed to be selected as a measure for a student’s readiness to leave remediation, citing years of problems with the CUNY placement exams as standard bearers for both the evaluation of proficiency upon entry and an exit assessment from remedial coursework (p. B4). Although the new testing requirements presented the university with the possibility of a shrinking applicant pool, it was quick to remind the public that a student could demonstrate his or her academic ability through multiple measures. If a student scored a 75 or higher on the English and Math Regents exam in high school, those scores could be used to exempt the student from remediation from the outset. Moreover, if a student scored 500 on each of the subject areas of the SAT, he or she would also be exempt from remediation (p. B4). However, it was clear that CUNY intended to use the SAT in a more comprehensive way. The central admissions office now planned to use the scores as a determining factor in the admissions process rather than solely as a measure to exempt a student from remediation. At the start of Matthew Goldstein’s first year as chancellor, it was clear that the recommendations outlined in Benno Schmidt’s report the year prior were of pressing priority. The alterations to the entrance examinations and the reliance on national standardized examinations to assess a student’s readiness for college-level work signaled to the University community that the central administration was focused on elevating CUNY’s national reputation, raising its threshold academic standards, and situating it for a broad redesign of both mission and strategic plan.

As Chancellor Goldstein settled into his new position, he was faced with the ongoing negotiations over the shifts in remedial policy that were voted on by the board the year prior. CUNY was still
awaiting news from the Board of Regents as to whether its members would publicly support the new structure and standards. On September 30, 1999, an external panel advising the Board of Regents recommended that “the City University of New York be allowed to proceed with its plans to bar students needing remedial instruction from its bachelor’s degree programs” (Arenson, 1999, p. B5). The panel was headed by Robert Zemsky, director of the Institute for Research on Higher Education at the University of Pennsylvania and while the report supported the strengthening of academic standards, it reprimanded the university and the local legislature for engaging in “political theater” that “threatened to swamp the educational value of the reforms” (p. B5). Chancellor Goldstein remarked that “he was gratified by the report, saying it supports his view that the changes will raise standards without diminishing educational opportunities” (Edelman & Graham, 1999, p. 026). Shortly after the contents of the report were disseminated, New York State Education Commissioner Richard Mills announced that he supported the alterations to the remedial structure at CUNY if the state promised to oversee the effects of the policy change. Furthermore, he expressed his support of the elimination of remediation at the senior colleges because he believed that it did not change CUNY’s mission and that poor and immigrant students who needed remedial support would still be able to access those courses at the community colleges (Arenson, 1999, p. B10). Many on the board, however, disagreed with the commissioner’s assessment, arguing that the mission of CUNY was in significant jeopardy if the Board of Regents were to vote in favor of its passage.

On November 23, 1999, the Board of Regents voted to approve the plan to eliminate remediation at CUNY’s senior colleges. The resolution passed with nine votes of the sixteen Regents, the minimum number required for adoption. It was noted that “history does indeed turn on little
hinges, and so the historic transformation of CUNY can begin” (Daily News, 1999, p. 40). The proposal contained a host of alterations that softened the implementation process compared to its harsh early iteration. First, the Regents settled on a compromise that allowed the elimination of remediation to begin at Queens, Brooklyn, Baruch, and Hunter colleges beginning in January 2000 but required that City and Lehman Colleges be permitted to delay their implementation process for one year. These two campuses were selected for delay because of their relatively high percentage of students of color compared to the other colleges. It was predicted that this group of students would be most adversely impacted by the new policy (Arenson, 1999, p. A1). A second compromise the Regents “said that CUNY must also allow students who are barred from senior college programs to petition professors for permission to take their senior college courses” (p. A1).

With the approval from the Board of Regents, the University and its new chancellor were positioned to proceed with the vast organizational restructuring recommended by the Schmidt commission. The timing, it appeared, could not have been better. As the 20th century faded into the background, so did the era of open admissions. Just after a widely celebrated New Year, Chancellor Goldstein set to work on a new direction for CUNY, one that intended to recalibrate years of frustration and negative public perception.

Shortly after the winter holiday concluded, Chancellor Goldstein announced that he would be initiating a complete restructuring of CUNY’s central administration. Goldstein stated that he planned to consolidate “the 13 deputy and vice chancellor positions into a streamlined corporate model” (Shin, 2000, p. 4). His initiative intended to make the university’s vast bureaucracy more efficient and turn over responsibility for much of the day-to-day operations to the campus presidents. At the central office, Chancellor Goldstein proposed three new executive positions to
support his office more effectively: a vice-chancellor in charge of academic and student affairs, a chief operating office, and a vice-chancellor in charge of external relations (p. 4). Along with his plans for restructuring the central office, Chancellor Goldstein also promised to abolish the policy stating that each campus president earn the same salaries no matter the size or scope of the institution. He favored a tiered approach where the elite senior college presidents might earn thirty or forty thousand dollars more a year than their junior counterparts. In addition, presidential raises would be based on a competitive system for the first time, taking into account measures like graduation rates and research performance into an annual review (p. 4). Under this plan, Chancellor Goldstein effectively and efficiently recalibrated the role of the chancellor and the central office. In a move toward centralization, the chancellor would act as CEO of a large enterprise, responsible for oversight of his chief executives but distanced from the day-to-day operations left up to campus leadership. His efforts to alleviate the pressure and weight of a complex bureaucracy allowed him to pursue avenues for expanding the mission and reach of the university.

Launching off of the elimination of remediation at the senior colleges, Chancellor Goldstein teamed up with New York City Board of Education President William Thompson to expand pre-college programs in the city’s schools as a way to further diminish the role of remediation at CUNY. Together, Goldstein and Thompson promised to triple the number of students enrolled in CUNY’s celebrated College Now program which offered both developmental and college-level courses in New York City public high schools (Shin, 2000, p. 12). Prior to 2000, 13,000 were enrolled in College Now courses. Chancellor Goldstein promised to increase that number to 45,000 within three years with an estimated cost of $20 million to the University (p. 12).
Additionally, the new CUNY administration announced that students in ninth grade would be eligible to begin sitting for CUNY placement examinations. For students who did not meet baseline proficiency standards, CUNY developmental skills faculty would offer immersion courses for those high school students as a way to offset remedial education during a student’s college years. At the same time, though, Chancellor Goldstein was also preparing to turn to outside companies to support remedial education at CUNY. He remarked that “CUNY is about to seek bids from outside contractors—either commercial or nonprofit—to conduct a pilot program for 500 students” (Arenson, 2000, p. B6). The pilot program called College Outreach and Preparation Program initially focused on adult students who required remediation in all three basic skills areas rather than those students coming directly from the public high schools (p. B6). University Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Louise Mirrer mentioned “we thought we would give it a try to see if anyone would have any more success working with these students than we do” (p. B6). Eventually, she noted, CUNY might be well served to run remedial centers separate from the colleges where students would work solely on basic skills education prior to entering the community or senior colleges. The faculty, particularly those who taught in developmental skills programs, believed that this was a “chance for private firms to make money off of [CUNY] students” (p. B6) and a move by the central administration toward the privatization of CUNY.

Chancellor Goldstein was also faced with another dilemma as he announced substantive plans to revamp the image of the University. In April, Goldstein gave a talk to high school guidance counselors. So much attention had been paid in recent years to how best to serve underperforming students enrolled at the CUNY colleges that one counselor asked Chancellor Goldstein how he planned to attract high-performing students to CUNY. Surprised, Goldstein was met with the
realities of declining enrollments and a low-quality academic profile nationally. Not only did the Chancellor recognize that CUNY needed to raise its academic standards so that more competitive students would be drawn to CUNY, he also realized that “shrinking enrollments could also determine whether the New York State Regents [would] allow the university to retain its recently adopted remedial policy” (Arenson, 1999, p. B2). Without the ordinary enrollment of thousands of remedial students, CUNY would be faced with progressively lower application pools as the new standards were fully implemented at the colleges.

As the first academic year of the 21st century drew to a close, Chancellor Goldstein and the Board of Trustees announced additional measures to raise the national academic perception of CUNY. In line with what many colleges and universities were doing nationwide, CUNY administrators stated that plans were in the works to require a common core undergraduate curriculum for all the colleges, a clear nod toward making the network of campuses a more centralized unit (Shin, 2000, p. 10). The faculty immediately responded to the proposal, charging the Board of Trustees and the chancellor with overstepping their authority in controlling the curriculum on the campuses. However, Goldstein argued that the creation of a core curriculum was one component of a larger master plan to restructure the university, believing that all students should be exposed to similar academic areas no matter what campus they attended. In the final hours of Chancellor Goldstein’s first year as Chancellor of the City University of New York, his vision for how the university should be organized came into clear view. The 2000-2004 Master Plan called for “the upgrading of teacher education, the creation of an honors college to attract the academically strongest students and an increase in the proportion of full-time faculty” (Arenson, 2000, p. B1). The Master Plan appeared to address concerns of how CUNY planned to attract top-tier students. The “university
says its goal is to raise average College Board scores for freshmen at its senior colleges by at least 30 points in 2003. It wants the average SAT scores at Queens College, for example, to reach 1,100 [by] fall and 1,130 by September 2003” (p. B1). With the national SAT score averaging 1,016, it was clear that CUNY hoped to recruit those students who would ordinarily apply to competitive schools based on SAT scores alone. Chancellor Goldstein also promised that CUNY would become more active in securing outside funding for its programs rather than relying solely on tuition dollars and limited state aid to support the university. As a keen manager of external relations and well-established in the New York philanthropic society, Chancellor Goldstein also determined that CUNY’s reputation could also be revived by tying influential local capital to the mission of the university. With this in mind, the Master Plan advanced a strong agenda for securing resources through external funding and “collaborating more closely with corporations and government agencies” (p. B1) as a way to rebrand the CUNY name. With a clear vision in mind, Dr. Goldstein and his newly appointed chief executives went to work to restructure the skeletal system of a beleaguered CUNY establishment. As the first decade of the 21st century quickly passed, the successes and challenges of Goldstein’s plan were realized.
Summary

Beginning with the tumultuous tenure of Chancellor W. Ann Reynolds, the story of CUNY in the late 1990s represents another key era of conflicted change and incredible growth. Throughout the three years leading up to the 21st century, CUNY transformed from a university plagued by declining funding and an abysmal national reputation to a comprehensive network of colleges, many of which were turned on their face to attract the world’s top students. However, the story is not as clear one of sweeping ascension. Throughout the late 90s, many of the reforms that Chancellor Reynolds and later Chancellor Goldstein attempted to implement, particularly around the area of remediation, were heavily contested by the faculty and local politicians. For those who had witnessed the impact of the early days of open admissions in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the notion that CUNY was abandoning its original mission cut deep into the soul of the work of many on the campuses. To some of the faculty, the era of Mina Shaughnessy and Buell Gallagher was being eclipsed by the desire of Mayor Giuliani and his political establishment in City Hall to remake CUNY as a modernized, more corporate university rather than an educational mission.

Yet, another argument could easily be made that the CUNY of Shaughnessy and Gallagher had, for years, not been living up to the vision they so clearly established during the dawn of open admissions. Since the fiscal crisis in 1975, low graduation rates and faltering academic standards had damaged the reputation of the university. By the 1990s, the campuses were in severe crisis. Campus presidencies were left vacant, sometimes for years. Physical plants were falling apart. The central administration and some campus presidents were dogged by scandal after scandal. It seemed that the utopian image of the late 1960s had, indeed, come undone.
So it was that Chancellor Goldstein was confronted with a challenging question. How could CUNY reclaim its national reputation, attract high-caliber students, and maintain its commitment to open access and admissions for those New York City public high school students who often enrolled needing deep remedial education? With developmental education confined to community colleges after plans to privatize remediation again came up as a non-starter, Chancellor Goldstein, the faculty, and teams across the university prepared to address the more nuanced issues students faced as they entered remediation at CUNY. The era of open admissions had instructed generations of faculty and students on how a university could serve multiple functions. It could provide basic skills education and offer pathways for those students to attain a college degree. However, CUNY was also responsible for ensuring that its students graduated and that those who enrolled received a high-quality education. In the coming years, the University would become a creative enterprise for reimagining and restructuring the basic idea of remediation. As economic recession loomed in 2007, energy behind this project gained momentum and programs emerged that changed the course of developmental education at the City University of New York.
The 21st Century Reshapes CUNY:
The University Launches a Period of Sustained Reform

The Recession Era at CUNY

The City University of New York, like many other colleges and universities across the country, was severely impacted by the Great Recession. The Finance Division of the New York City Council reported in 2010 that CUNY’s enrollment was the highest it had been since 1975 at the height of the open admissions era (New York City Council, 2010, p. 1). The University experienced “growth where the number of new freshmen accepted for Spring 2009 had increased by more than 13 percent” (p. 1). With over 253,000 students, CUNY had seen record growth particularly in its community colleges since the onset of the recession. At the time, the community colleges were envisioned by many, especially by reformers hoping to restructure the two-year system, as the “best engine of workforce development” (p. 1) for New York City. The local government recognized that of those who graduated with an associate’s degree, close to 90% found a job within six months of graduation, most of whom remained in New York after earning their degree (p. 1). In preparation for the 2010 budget, lawmakers reported that CUNY graduates who worked in the state post-graduation added $15 billion a year into the regional economy (p. 1). Yet, as enrollments skyrocketed, the number of full-time faculty remained stagnant. Over 11,000 faculty were on the University’s payroll in 1975 and little more than 6,500 were members of the full-time ranks in 2010, a deficit largely managed through the proliferation of adjunct hires (p. 2). In order to support the demand for higher education at CUNY during the recession, the University estimated that it needed an additional 2,300 faculty to provide a meaningful education to its growing student population.
**Economics.** Students who would not have ordinarily enrolled in a collegiate program after high school found it necessary to earn additional credentials as a result of the economic downturn. Since the late 1990s, CUNY’s reputation as a national leader in affordable higher education had also been on the rise and made the university an attractive option for many New York City residents. Recognizing that a high school diploma’s worth on the labor market had decreased substantially as unemployment continued to rise generated greater demand for community college education. However, funding for CUNY from both the state and the city had diminished significantly since the start of the economic crisis. In turn, tuition revenue became a substantial source of income for the University, placing a significant financial burden on students and their families during a particularly challenging fiscal period. The total CUNY budget for 2010 approached $2.5 billion. Although the state and city reported that this was a $27 million increase over the previous year, the majority of the additional revenue was projected to be generated by tuition increases (p. 2). City support for the community colleges was projected to decrease by 12.5%, a total of $30 million (p. 2). Furthermore, expected gains from tuition revenue were placed at 5.1%, leaving the two-year institutions close to $24 million short just as their enrollments entered a record-breaking year. The planned $200 per semester increase at the community colleges was not enough to assuage concerns that the campuses would be able to reasonably operate in the fall semester. During times of economic hardship, the “City Council has provided funding relief for the community colleges by restoring operational reductions and creating programmatic initiatives” (p. 3) to offset line-item deficits.
Since the cessation of senior college remedial programs in 2000, the demographics of the community colleges had changed to reflect a higher percentage of Black and Hispanic students who were only eligible for two-year college admissions based on historically low high school averages and SAT scores. Of the 32,000 first-time freshmen who were matriculated in a two-year program at CUNY in 2010, the large majority were comprised of low-income students of color. Of these students, many were considered by the University to be eligible for New York State’s Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). As a result of the economic recession and the state’s limited ability to continue funding TAP at historically high levels, the legislature proposed a complete overhaul and restructuring of TAP eligibility to streamline how funds were being distributed. The 2010 New York State budget proposed to “align TAP awards with a student’s course-load by changing the definition of ‘full-time’ from 12 to 15 credits per semester and giving those students who register for 10 to 14 credits a pro-rated award” (p. 6) rather than a full disbursement. Although the University welcomed the financial incentive from the state to encourage more students to
attend full-time, it acknowledged that this proposed change would negatively impact the success of part-time students. At the start of the fall semester in 2010, close to 12% of entering students enrolled in an associate’s degree program part-time. The percentage of part-time students certainly did not represent a majority however, these students often represented CUNY’s most vulnerable students, many of whom had obligations to their families or jobs that required them to attend college in a non-traditional, non-linear fashion (p. 6).

Table 3.2: Percentage of TAP-Eligible Associate Degree-Seeking Students 2010-2011

![Bar chart showing percentage of TAP-Eligible Associate Degree-Seeking Students by ethnicity (American Indian, Asian, Black, Hispanic, White)]

New York State TAP typically covered the remainder of a student’s tuition and fees after federal aid was subtracted from the total bill. For community college students at CUNY, the central funding source for higher education from the federal government came in the form of Pell Grants, awards that students were not required to pay back after graduation. However, with the proposed constraints placed on TAP eligibility, it was possible that students would be saddled with additional costs that in prior years would have been paid by the state.
The erosion of state support for higher education coupled with high unemployment in New York City generated a financial scenario that placed a heavy financial burden on families of color who were now forced to seek alternative funding sources to offset the gap in total cost versus total aid. In 2010, Black and Hispanic students represented the two racial categories responsible for the largest total dollar amount in unmet annual financial obligation to the University. Goldrick-Rab, Kelchen & Houle (2014) remark that “white families hold about eight times as much wealth as black families” citing an “absolute racial gap in wealth [that] increased by $151,000” (p. 15) between 1984 and 2009. In addition, the recession eroded wealth among black families across the country and widened the already discernible gap. At CUNY, white students in the community college system represented the lowest amount of unmet annual need among the five reported racial groups. Black students and their families were responsible for the largest share of the total cost of enrollment after financial aid was considered.
Across the community colleges at CUNY, the average predictors of financial aid offered a compelling justification of the aforementioned study on wealth. The central indicator of the amount of family or individual financial resources that will have to paid to a student’s education after all financial awards are accounted for is called the Estimated Family Contribution (EFC). The average EFC for White students is markedly higher than that of their Black and Hispanic peers, indicating that White families hold considerable more wealth at the time of financial aid filing than do families of color at CUNY. For the purposes of understanding EFC morefully, however, it is advantageous to look closely at the metrics that generate the overall score. For traditional community college students who are still reported as dependents on their parent’s annual income taxes, their parents’ earnings are indicators of how the federal and state governments determine the amount of financial aid a student is to receive. For community college students at CUNY, White families report over $13,000 per year in income over Black families and

Table 3.4: Unmet Annual Need in Dollar Amount for Associate Degree-Seeking Students 2010-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Average Need in Dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>4600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>5600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>4800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>5200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
$17,320 more a year than Hispanic families. Goldrick-Rab, Kelchen & Houle (2014) note that “racial disparities in wealth are largely due to disparities of employment, years of home ownership, levels of education, and differences in inheritances, as well variation in income” (p. 15). Moreover, the period of economic recession reduced the overall wealth of black families by up to 31% while only decreasing the wealth of white families by 11% (p. 15).

In terms of unmet annual need for CUNY community college students, the algorithm by which financial aid is calculated is deeply connected to a student’s family income and the total amount the government believes they can pay. Goldrick-Rab, Kelchen & Houle (2014) remark that “despite a paradigmatic shift in focus from income to wealth in most other areas of social policy, higher education policy continues to emphasize family income as the way to understand a family’s available resources for college” (p. 16). Although there is considerable difference in the level of income between White families and families of color at CUNY, the dramatic disparities in true dollar amount of unmet annual need indicates that there are variances in overall wealth.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Total Annual</th>
<th>Total Annual</th>
<th>Total Unmet Annual</th>
<th>Parent 1 Wages</th>
<th>Parent 2 Wages</th>
<th>Parent Taxable Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>$4062.00</td>
<td>$9160.00</td>
<td>$5819.00</td>
<td>$11306.00</td>
<td>$16597.00</td>
<td>$26954.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>$5455.00</td>
<td>$10288.00</td>
<td>$5565.00</td>
<td>$12787.00</td>
<td>$9284.00</td>
<td>$22118.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>$4909.00</td>
<td>$10626.00</td>
<td>$6262.00</td>
<td>$7729.00</td>
<td>$16804.00</td>
<td>$25127.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>$5164.00</td>
<td>$9748.00</td>
<td>$5281.00</td>
<td>$8204.00</td>
<td>$12326.00</td>
<td>$21345.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>$4239.00</td>
<td>$8992.00</td>
<td>$5381.00</td>
<td>$20633.00</td>
<td>$16935.00</td>
<td>$39250.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The level of family income without regard for additional assets like home ownership and business investments reflects the disparities in unmet annual financial aid among community college students. The mean total amount of taxable income for White families is close to double that of Hispanic families and close to $15,000 more per year than Black families. However, the distribution of financial aid does not accurately reflect this disparity. The mean difference in White and Hispanic student financial aid awards is just shy of $1,000. Moreover, Black students require the most need of any other racial category in the community college system. Yet, their financial aid packages fail to reach even 50% of the required financial aid. What is clear is that Black families far surpass other racial categories in the amount of student loans taken out to support an individual’s college education.
Goldrick-Rab, Kelchen & Houle (2014) report that although 63% of students who apply for and receive federal student loans are White, “black students and their families are disproportionately reliant on student loans for college access” (p. 11). They suggest that “black students are much more likely to borrow for college than their white, Hispanic, and Asian counterparts” (p. 11), an assessment that is realized in the CUNY community college system during the recession period.

It was determined that overall, Black and White students typically take out the same dollar amount nationally, an average reaching close to $8,000. However, as Goldrick-Rab, Kelchen & Houle (2014) mention, this total represents a far greater financial burden for Black families who already are disadvantaged in terms of overall wealth compared to their White counterparts.

CUNY has publicly acclaimed that it offers “debt-free degrees for nearly 80%” and that “affordable, no-surprises tuition and availability of financial aid ease the burden, making the new American Dream of a debt-free college education a reality for nearly eight in 10 CUNY graduates.
in 2013” (City University of New York, 2017). The data, however, show that there is a significant difference in the amount of student loan debt accrued by community college students in comparison to their peers in one of the senior colleges.

Table 3.6: Sum of CUNY Community and Senior College Loan Debt by Race 2012-2013

Although many more students from CUNY graduate with little to no student loan debt, the cost of attending higher education and its post-graduation financial burden disproportionately impacts Black community college students whose chances of ultimately earning a baccalaureate degree are weakened by starting in a two-year program. Students who begin their college education in the community college sector and receive state and federal financial aid become highly vulnerable to the erosion of their respective aid packages over the years it takes to complete a degree. The New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) has specific requirements for the continued maintenance of funding and only permits three years of funding for students in associate’s degree programs and four years of funding for those in bachelor’s degree programs (Higher Education
Moreover, the bulk of financial aid recipients are required to attend full-time, take at least twelve credits, and enroll in courses only required by their program of study. Additionally, students receiving state aid must maintain at least a C average and accumulate a prescribed number of credits per semester. Only 3% of community college students at CUNY meet the three-year graduation mark. Out of the 11,606 students who enrolled in a two-year program in 2012, only 909 received a diploma in three years. This leaves the majority of students still working toward their degree searching for additional funding options when TAP no longer covers basic expenses like tuition and fees.

CUNY’s acknowledgement that 80% of its graduates leave college debt-free only accounts for those students who earn degrees. The vast majority of students in the community college system enroll in a degree-seeking program but never earn a degree. However, just because a student fails to earn a degree does not mean that he or she exits the CUNY system debt-free. In fact, dropouts carry with them a heavy financial burden once they make the decision to stop taking classes in a CUNY two-year college. The 2012 cohort provides an illustration of this dropout debt effect. This effect negatively impacts Black students who are predominantly reliant on student loans to offset the cost of attending college. By the fifth semester, a total of 6,340 students had withdrawn from CUNY prior to graduating. Although the large majority of these students left college without relying on student loans to cover the cost of enrollment, a group of 434 Black community college students accrued close to $1 million in debt to pay for school and never earned a degree. A substantial number of these students accumulated $3,500 in debt, a sum close to the cost of one semester’s tuition at a CUNY community college. In contrast, the 196 Black students who graduated from a community college in two-years accrued little more than $40,000 in total debt.
This number is more closely aligned to the 80% debt-free benchmark reported by the university. In this case, 84% of Black students who earn an associate’s degree in two years graduate from the community college with no student loan debt. The dropout debt effect is particularly troublesome in the community college system where graduation rates are inherently low and the barriers to a four-year degree remain high.

Table 3.7: Average Debt Per Black Student (Graduate or Dropout) After Fifth Semester

Community college dropouts retain a higher average debt portfolio than do their peers who graduate. From a policy perspective, the university not only is faced with questions regarding how to increase retention but also how to alleviate the financial burden from struggling students so that they can either succeed in their present path toward graduation or, if they find it necessary to withdraw from the institution, to offer them a reasonable chance to return without the fear of additional financial struggle because of already accrued student loan debt. Additionally, time to degree becomes an operative predictor of a student’s financial stability. Because TAP, and
similarly Pell, have strict limitations on the amount of time a grant can be awarded as well as particular academic requirements, underprepared students who historically take longer to graduate from the community college, if they do at all, are confronted with rapidly depleting financial aid awards and are forced to look for costly alternatives to fund the remainder of their college education or drop out. Although CUNY has a high percentage of graduates who exit the university with no student loan debt, the community college remains an area where a contingent of struggling students accrue substantial personal financial burden in an attempt to complete the intended two-year degree.

**Academics.** Academic preparation for community college entrants is widely diverse. At CUNY, the open admissions policy that permits any high school graduate or student with a GED to enter a two-year college regardless of academic preparation creates an incredibly complex mix of ability. For CUNY community college students, the high school experience is essential to eventual success in college. Since the large majority of students who enroll in a two-year program at CUNY graduate from a local public high school, the quality of education they receive is a strong indicator of how the student will fare in college. Barnett (2016) remarks that “not all high schools offer a full complement of rigorous college-preparatory courses, and student access to these courses is uneven even when they are available” (p. 6). In New York City, the level of college preparation is assessed by the student’s scores on the statewide Regents Exams, particularly in math and English, and a student’s overall high school average.
Table 3.8: Mean Regents Exam Scores and High School Averages, Community College Students 2012-2013

Table 3.9: Mean Regents Exam Scores and High School Averages, Senior College Students 2012-2013
The mean scores for community college students are roughly ten points lower than those of their senior college peers. The demand for developmental education, also referred to as remediation, at the community college remains one of the greatest struggles of the mission of the CUNY two-year institutions. Since the early 2000s when remedial education was removed from the senior colleges, a renewed policy emphasis has been placed on reforming developmental skills sequences so that students have a greater chance of graduating and transferring to a senior college. High school averages, Regents examination scores, and SAT scores often translate directly into whether or not a student is classified as needing remediation by the CUNY system. The 2012-2013 community college cohort enrolled with academic backgrounds that indicate that they may face challenges in college-level math. Of the total population, Black students came to CUNY with the lowest averages in Algebra and in the basic mathematics sequence required for high school graduation.

College-level and developmental mathematics have long been demonstrated barriers to student success in the community college. The majority of students who enroll at a CUNY two-year college are required to take three placement exams at the time of matriculation to determine whether they are to be placed in remedial (developmental) courses for reading, writing, or math or a combination of all three. Logue, Watanabe-Rose & Douglas (2017) remark that the college “readiness gap is widest when considering students at nonselective two-year colleges, and students who are black, Hispanic, or from low-income families” (p. 79). Moreover, they argue that only one out of every ten students who enrolls in a remedial course at a community college graduates from the institution within three years. For many students, basic math at the remedial level and then the gatekeeper college algebra course are signature barriers to graduation. Logue, Watanabe-Rose & Douglas (2017) provide evidence for alternative pathways to these courses and offer
results from a randomized controlled trial at CUNY that assigns students to either remedial elementary algebra or to a college-level statistics course. The authors found that “students placed directly in college-level statistics did far better than their counterparts in remedial classes, even when students in remedial classes were also given extra support” (p. 79). At CUNY, over 65% of students in the community colleges require at least one subject area of remediation.

Table 3.10: Percentage of Students Requiring Remediation by Race and Number of Subject Areas, 2012-2013

Black and Hispanic students are the most likely to require remediation in at least one or two subject areas. Of these students, 18,549 out of XX entering CUNY’s community colleges in 20XX-20YY were required to take a course in developmental mathematics in order to demonstrate proficiency in this subject area. Although developmental mathematics courses vary from campus to campus, it has been a common academic practice to provide incoming community college students with courses in basic algebra. Of those students who enrolled in a remedial mathematics course at a
CUNY community college, 50% failed the class on their first attempt. Of those students who failed their first attempt at remedial math, over 25% dropped out after the first semester, the majority of whom were Black and Hispanic. Logue, Watanabe-Rose & Douglas (2017), however, found that 56% of students enrolled in the statistics course passed in comparison to 45% in the remedial algebra course. In addition to the alternative mathematics course, students in the statistics track were also offered weekly workshops to ensure they were proficient in the basic skills required for successful completion of the course. Students in the algebra section were also offered workshops but still concluded with lower success rates than the students in the statistics course. They also found that students in the statistics track were somewhat more likely to persist into the second year of their coursework. Overall, the alternative to algebra appears to make slight but worthwhile adjustments to the overall progress a student makes toward graduation.

Remedial mathematics courses deter many students from completing their degrees. However, developmental mathematics concerns are symptomatic of the much larger remedial problems faced by community college students. In comparison to their non-remedial counterparts, students flagged for developmental education at CUNY are faced with far greater difficulties in persistence, graduation, and transfer.

Bailey & Jaggars (2016) remark that “almost two-thirds of students who enter community colleges every year are judged to be academically not ready to engage in college-level coursework” (p. 1). However, they suggest that although over $4 billion annually is invested into developmental coursework, student success outcomes remain incredibly weak. For many students who are determined to need developmental skills work in two or three subject areas, “the likelihood is quite
low that they will ever complete a college-level course in that subject area” (p. 1). Bailey & Jaggars, among many others, acknowledge that the traditional mechanisms for assessing a student’s academic ability upon entry and the types of programs those students are enrolled in are barriers to overall success. First, research has shown that entrance examinations do little in the way of predicting overall college success. Second, extended developmental skills sequences erode a student’s financial aid and serve as barriers to credit-bearing coursework. Lastly, developmental skills courses are designed to teach students how to pass an exam rather than nurturing skills needed for college-level work (p. 2). Overall, evidence shows that community college students are overwhelmingly “under-placed” in remedial coursework, assigned to zero-credit courses when they could be successful in credit-bearing coursework upon entry (p. 2). This phenomenon contributes to low persistence rates throughout the stages of developmental coursework and into credit-bearing degree programs.
Table 3.11: Percentage of Remedial Students Still Enrolled at a CUNY Community College by Semester and Remedial Status, 2012-2013

CUNY’s data indicate a similar trend of erosion as described by Bailey & Jaggars. Students entering the community college who do not require remediation are far more likely to persist through the first four semesters of college. For students who are flagged as remedial upon entry, the likelihood of persisting through the first two-years at a community college decreases with each additional subject area of developmental coursework required to be classified as proficient. Bailey & Jaggars (2016) note that for students who are triple remedial, 26% of those never even enroll in the first set of developmental skills courses. For those who do enroll, between 17%-22% do not successfully complete the course and 9%-15% of those unsuccessful students drop out after this first attempt (p. 4). For students at CUNY community colleges, credit accumulation is an important predictor of eventual academic success. For many students enrolled in developmental
skills courses, the absence of credit accumulation and the inability to see measurable results toward degree acquisition correlates with the high dropout effect in the community college.

Table 3.12: Mean Cumulative Credits Earned by Semester and Remedial Status, 2012-2013

Non-remedial students who enter directly into credit-bearing coursework begin to accumulate credits after the first semester. In fact, the mean number of credits non-remedial students accumulate following the second semester is triple the number earned by their peers who require extensive developmental coursework in three subject areas. For each additional subject area of developmental coursework the university requires a student complete, the fewer credits the student will attain throughout the first two-years of college. Although developmental education is designed as an access point for students who are underprepared for college-level work, the structure by which remediation is designed and implemented serves as a barrier to graduation and eventual transfer from the community college. Bailey & Jaggars (2016) note that “when all of these factors are taken together, it is not surprising that traditional remedial education is not
effective in helping underprepared students rise to and succeed in college-level work” (p. 2). At CUNY, there is very little understanding of how remedial students eventually fare in credit-bearing coursework because of the immense attrition that occurs prior to a student’s exit from remediation. However, the question of whether remediation is effective or not is far more nuanced and requires a deeper understanding of the positive impacts and necessity of at least some developmental coursework. Abandoning the practice of developmental coursework entirely in postsecondary education would set many students up for failure in the first year. However, the structure and implementation of remedial education has created obstacles for students who are most in need of additional academic and interpersonal support.

The path toward graduation for community college students is often precarious and the eventual goal is never realized by the vast majority. I will now turn to the CUNY dataset constructed for this study on student progress in two different reform models. Because the dataset is relatively new, the only available metric to understand completion is by looking at the two-year graduation rate. However, the national standard for many community college completion models uses a three-year graduation rate as the baseline metric. Although most associate degree programs are intended ideally to be completed by full-time matriculants in two-years, a variety of confounding factors, including part-time enrollment, remediation, and the accrual of excess credits often slows down this process. Yet, for many of the recession-era reforms, a return to the goal of the two-year community college re-emerged as a possibility for many students. Even though the data does not allow a longer-term analysis, trends can be assessed by examining completion results after two years.
Table 3.13: Percentage of Students Graduating in Two-Years by Remedial Status, 2012-2013

In this case, the completion rates are unable to illustrate a snapshot of eventual academic success for community college students. However, an initial analysis confirms what the research suggests, that students with more than one remedial need are poised to spend longer in the community college before being eligible to graduate and transfer to a four-year college. For these students, the path to graduation is much longer right from the beginning. In most cases, students in these remedial categories drop out long before they complete the required developmental skills sequence and far prior to beginning credit-bearing coursework.

The recession era at the City University of New York reengaged faculty and administrators in conversations around remediation. Since developmental coursework was moved out of the senior colleges in 2000, the community colleges have been forced to respond to flagging graduation rates and high attrition from developmental skills departments. With shifting policy attention to efficiency and accountability in postsecondary education, new strategies for helping students to be
successful in the community college were paramount to the development of strategic initiatives during the economic downturn. Two major programs emerged at CUNY from these conversations in response to the growing demand for community college education in a time of increased scrutiny and accountability in the two-year college system.
An Evaluation of Two Experimental Community College Programs: Accelerated Studies in Associate Programs (ASAP) & Guttman Community College

Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP)

Overview of ASAP. In 2007, the City University of New York was awarded funding from the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) to implement a community college initiative that would assist students in completing their degrees on time. The Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) experiment was designed to address the principle barriers that historically stood between community college students and graduation. Recognizing that traditional developmental skills programs decreased a student’s ability to move through a two-year program efficiently without experiencing financial aid erosion, ASAP relied on the most recent evidence-based research to reconfigure significant aspects of the student academic experience. ASAP’s intention was to address both the structural and academic components of the CUNY community college program. First, the structural overhaul included financial incentives such as tuition-waivers to address gaps between tuition paid by TAP or other programs and that needed and monthly New York City MetroCards to allow free travel on the city’s subways and buses. Additionally, ASAP required that students attend full-time, a significant departure from traditional community college life where many students begin as full-time matriculants only to drop down to part-time shortly after the first semester. The program also included consolidated courses schedules to make courses more compatible with work schedules and personal advising. Second, the ASAP program promised to move remedial students through their developmental coursework the summer prior to entry into the community college, with the provision that if they did not pass all exams during the summer, they would work closely with tutors and advisors to ensure
proficiency as quickly as possible during the first year. ASAP, however, was not designed to accept triple remedials, those who had not achieved proficiency in all three subject areas prior to admission.

The ASAP program believed that it could graduate 50% of the first 2007 cohort within three years. The first evaluation study was completed by the university in 2009. The findings indicated that of the 1,132 students who enrolled in the first ASAP cohort, 341 students had graduated by 2009, “a 30.1% 2-year graduation rate” (p. vi). The first study identified key accomplishments and features of the ASAP program. One of the key initial findings indicated that “more than 90% of ASAP 2-year graduates indicated plans to transfer to 4-year colleges to work towards a Bachelor’s degree” (p. vii). The relationship between the community and senior colleges at CUNY is unique in terms of student aspirations. For many who enter one of the two-year institutions, credit accumulation and the development of a competitive GPA are essential motivators in the pathway toward transfer. However, many students’ aspirations are stymied by the barriers of multi-level remedial requirements and unclear degree pathways coupled with rapidly depleting financial aid packages. The first cohort of ASAP students “overwhelmingly [credited] the financial incentives and comprehensive advisement support as key reasons why they were able to complete their Associate’s degrees in record time” (p. vii). The careful planning of the structural components of the ASAP program prompted excellent results compared with those of a control group of traditional community college students.

The profile of the first ASAP cohort reflected that of many traditional community college entrants. The sample population included a balance of men and women, the majority of whom ranged
between 18-20 years old. Over two-thirds were first-time freshmen who represented the five boroughs of New York City. The median family income approached $35,000 and over 55% of students were Pell Grant recipients. Moreover, the sample population was comprised of 68% Black and Latino, 20% White, and 10% Asian. These figures were, by comparison, similar to the control group of traditional community college students in all areas except full-time enrollment. In the comparison group, only one-third of students were registered as full-time matriculants. Students were distributed among six of the CUNY community colleges: Borough of Manhattan Community College, Bronx Community College, Hostos Community College, Kingsborough Community College, LaGuardia Community College, and Queensborough Community College. The results indicated that ASAP students achieved a 30% two-year graduation rate compared to an 11% rate for the control group (p. 19).

The evaluation study used two comparison groups to understand the impact of the ASAP model. Two comparison groups were determined to be most effective because one could be used to evaluate overall academic impact related to a similar, traditional community college cohort and the second could be used as a comparison group for socioeconomic factors as a result of socioeconomic variables being unavailable in 2006 (p. 20). The “initial analyses between ASAP and the 2006 comparison groups students revealed that the two groups differed on important demographic variables, such as age, admission type, and Pell receipt” (p. 20). Because there were observable differences, the principal investigators concluded that a more rigorous form of statistical analysis was required to allow for appropriate and sturdy matching between cases. Investigators applied a propensity score matching procedure that attempted to select the best matched pairs between the control and experimental groups. However, because of the strict
parameters necessary to obtain propensity scores using nearest neighbor analysis, the subset was limited to only 625 matched pairs, eliminating almost half of the sample population. Investigators then employed optimal full matching to allow for greater diversity in the matched pairs. Ultimately only 2.5% of cases were lost in this process (p. 21).

The analysis found that ASAP students did remarkably better in the first two years of college than did their traditional peers in the community college. ASAP students were “also retained at a significantly higher rate than the comparison group” (p. 22). By the third semester, students in the ASAP program had earned 3.7 more credits than their peers in the control group (p. 22). Overall, 90% of ASAP students re-enrolled the following year, 80% the third year and 73% the fourth year. For control group students, overall retention drops below 50% in the fourth year (p. 23). Furthermore, by fall of the second year, ASAP student on average had earned 39.3 credits in comparison to 36.5 credits earned by their traditional peers. Overall, the initial conclusions of the study indicate that ASAP students were positioned to reach their goals of associate degree attainment and transfer faster than their counterparts in traditional two-year programs. Further studies also conclude that ASAP continues to have a substantial impact on college completion.

In 2012, MDRC performed an external evaluation on ASAP’s early impacts. The research organization conducted a randomized controlled trial to “study the impacts (or effects) of ASAP, compared with standard services and courses at the colleges, on students’ academic outcomes over a three-year period” (Scrivener, Weiss, & Sommo, 2012, p. ES-2) in order to understand how the interventions compared to traditional models. The evaluation study drew a sample population of 896 from Borough of Manhattan Community College, Kingsborough Community College, and
LaGuardia Community College. Eligible students were randomly assigned to ASAP or non-ASAP programs at one of the colleges (p. ES-3). The findings from the 2010 semester indicated similar results as the early study conducted by the university. During the “first semester, ASAP increased the proportion of students who enrolled full time and increased the average number of credits students earned” (p. ES-3). One of the central concerns regarding the ASAP program has been its decision not to accept students who are non-proficient in all three basic skills areas. Although ASAP does accept students into its programs who are double and single remedial, triple remedial students have been encouraged to join pre-college programs like CUNY Start that prepares incoming students to retake the CUNY Assessment Tests without using financial aid dollars to move through developmental skills courses. However, ASAP early outcomes showed that the program “increased the proportion of students who had completed all of their developmental requirements by the end of the first semester” (p. ES-5). The data indicate that “47 percent of the program group had completed their developmental requirements, compared with 32 percent of the control group” (p. ES-5). In this case, ASAP is praised for moving a higher percentage of students through developmental coursework in comparison to the traditional model that has fewer wraparound services and attendance requirements.

The MDRC report also concluded that ASAP increased both first-year retention and the number of credits a student earned during the second semester. The analysis suggested that students in the ASAP program group earned “an average of 11.4 total credits whereas control group students earned an average of 9.3 total credits” (p. 18). This 22% increase in total credits earned was complimented by a 10% increase in first-year retention over the control group. The study argued that the positive impact of mandated full-time enrollment generated a positive impact on retention
and credits earned. The authors indicated that “it has been established that part-time attendance is negatively associated with persistence” (p. 4) and although “many reforms have been implemented to increase rates of college persistence and completion for disadvantaged students” (p. 4), there has been little overall impact on national community college retention rates. ASAP’s early impacts on academic success and retention and graduation rates provided a relevant foundation for the university to focus its resources on this and similar programs. However, alongside a new approach to traditional community college education was a much-needed understanding of how to fund the various services that ASAP illustrated were successful.

Levin & Garcia (2013) conducted a cost-benefit analysis of the ASAP program. The substantive finding of the study indicated that “the cost per three-year graduate with an associate degree was actually lower for ASAP than for the comparison group” (p. 4) because of the discernible increase in the number of degrees awarded for ASAP students compared to those students in traditional remedial programs. The study first looked at the relationship between cost-per-degree for community college students who completed their associate’s degree and the overall economic benefit to the local economy. The data found that the total cost per community college graduate to the taxpaying public averaged $65,884 and that each graduate contributed an additional $205,514 to the local economy (p. 7). The net benefits averaged $139,630, a 3.1 benefit/cost ratio for the taxpayer (p. 7). Moreover, the comparative analysis between the ASAP cohort and the control group showed a $6,582 increase in the net benefits to the local economy per graduate, a finding that is heavily correlated with the increase in the number of graduates from the ASAP program. Given the increased number of graduates and the heightened return on investment, the study found that the average cost of educating an ASAP graduate was $59,302 in comparison to
the $65,884 to educate a traditional community college student who had a lower probability of graduating. This baseline investment was enhanced by the graduate’s increased opportunity for gainful employment after their date of completion, reducing the need for a student to access public assistance and other social services that are reflected as a negative cost to the public (p. 19). Overall, the supportive educational and personal structural components of ASAP and the focus on retention and increased graduation rates led to a successful experiment in community college reform. The early outcomes reported by several evaluative studies of the ASAP program were largely positive and offered the university a point from which to expand the program and other similar initiatives.

**Stella and Charles Guttman Community College**

**Overview of Guttman Community College.** At the same time the university was implementing the ASAP model in 2007, faculty and administrators from across the colleges joined to fulfill one of Chancellor Matthew Goldstein’s premier initiatives. In the spring 2008 semester, the university announced that it was formulating plans to develop and open a new community college, the first in over forty years. The initial successes of the ASAP model demonstrated that substantive reform in the community college sector was possible. Another central objective of creating a new community college was to allow for continued growth of two-year college programs as demand rose but physical plant size remained stagnant. Chancellor Goldstein charged a planning team “to serve as coordinating entity, responsible for consulting with CUNY faculty, staff, and educational professionals across the nation; surveying the larger CUNY community; and reviewing research and findings about community college practices and outcomes” (City University of New York Office of Academic Affairs, 2008, p. 5). The planning team was led by University Dean John
Mogulescu and University Director of Collaborative Programs Tracy Meade. Under their direction, the diverse team of scholars and practitioners sought to identify the key areas of community college pedagogy and operations that acted as barriers to student success and to reimagine those processes to move higher percentages of matriculants to graduation (p. 5). The planning team identified a number of key structural elements, similar to those employed by the ASAP program, that, if implemented, would be central to increasing graduation rates.

The planning team organized the framing document for what would be called the New Community College at CUNY (NCC) until a formal name was adopted. The concept paper laid out a number of guiding principles, both structural and pedagogical, that would direct the new institution into operation. First, the team believed that students must be required to attend full-time, acknowledging that “unprepared students require more sustained time to develop, practice, and demonstrate beyond the level of minimum proficiency” (p. 8) required for the degree. However, they concluded that the traditional practice of zero-credit remedial programs must be abandoned given low national success rates of such models. Rather, the concept paper spelled out an integrative model where students would enroll directly into credit-bearing coursework where embedded developmental skills would be practiced in extended class sessions (p. 8). Second, the planning team argued for limited majors that contained “well-defined steps to degree, transfer, and/or employment” (p. 9). The rationale for a limited selection of majors stems from the work Thomas Bailey and the Community College Research Center (CCRC) team had been reporting on for several years. In what Bailey calls a “structured pathways model,” students are presented with fewer choices regarding major selection, a process that often leads to confusing choices, slowing down progress toward degree and leaving students saddled with excess credits and limited
financial aid options. Lastly, the college would merge student services with academic affairs to provide wraparound support services for students where traditionally they would be required to tend to these areas of college life separately. The framers recognized that “the implications of time spent differently suggests a need for curricular and instructional configurations that depart significantly from the traditional baccalaureate structures community colleges inherited and are expected to replicate” (p. 9). The New Community College adopted a number of programmatic structures that other community colleges had attempted to construct as add-ons to an already established traditional structure. Where these programs, individually, had gained some success, there had been no experiment to-date that attempted to craft an entire institution using a range of best practices.

Wathington, et al (2011) remark that students enrolled in pre-college programs the summer prior to entering a community college achieve greater success in the first year (p. iii). As pre-college summer initiatives, or summer bridge programs, were being implemented at community colleges across the country, the planning team for the NCC recognized that underprepared college students would likely be better prepared to begin their first semester if they participated in an intensive introduction to both college life and the complex integrated curriculum (City University of New York Office of Academic Affairs, 2008, p. 14). Moreover, the NCC’s three-week summer bridge program would potentially “reduce the need for developmental education in college” (Wathington, et al, 2011, p. v). At NCC, students would participate in a condensed first-year experience sequence designed to introduce them to courses in reading and writing, mathematics, and the foundational social science components of the first-year seminar they would encounter in the fall.
The mandatory summer bridge program is supported by various charitable organizations that provide students with lunch vouchers, MetroCards, and stipends to ensure regular attendance.

Central to the New Community College’s experimental design was the implementation of an educational model that integrated developmental and credit-bearing coursework within a guided pathways structure. The NCC planning team organized a comprehensive first-year curriculum that eliminated zero-credit remedial courses but also recognized the need to restructure the traditional community college classroom setting where students were split into discrete disciplinary courses that were not connected in any meaningful way. In order to accomplish this goal, faculty and administrators prepared the framework for an integrative City Seminar that would serve as the foundational course for students in the first year. For this and other first-year courses, students were to be arranged in Houses and Cohorts, learning communities that were designed to increase engagement and promote retention by focusing on relationships integral to student success. Bailey, Jaggars & Jenkins (2016) state “by reducing class time spent on factual content and procedural practice, instructors can spend more time on activities that build students’ motivation to learn relevant content, skills, concepts, and habits of mind, whether inside or outside of class” (p. 100).

The NCC’s City Seminar was designed with this goal in mind. In order to effectively braid together developmental and credit-bearing coursework, City Seminar earns students the traditional three credits but meets for 10.5 contact hours per week. The seminar was organized around four distinct components to address each of the necessary basic skills: 1) Critical Issue – a foundational introduction to a topic in the social sciences, 2) Quantitative Reasoning – a basic mathematics course that applies numerical concepts to real-world issues, 3) Reading & Writing – a developmental literacy and composition section typically reserved for remedial education, 4)
Academic Support Space – an instructor-led supplemental instruction space for students to work on skill-building activities. The extended time-on-task was the key rationale for eliminating zero-credit courses, giving students an opportunity to work slowly and deliberately through the developmental skills building process while also earning enough credits to ensure satisfactory progress toward their associate’s degree. In addition to the City Seminar, students at the New Community College were required to take a course in statistics rather than the traditional basic math or college algebra courses required by many community colleges around the country. As Logue, Watanabe-Rose & Douglas (2017) mention, “students who were placed directly in college-level statistics did far better than their counterparts in remedial classes, regardless of their score on the placement test” (p. 81). Students are placed into one of two versions of statistics in their first semester: 1) a stretched version that doubles the amount of time-on-task to allow for those at a lower math proficiency to move slowly through the curriculum or 2) an unstretched version for those with higher math proficiency to move more quickly through the material. Additionally, students are enrolled into a qualitative methods course called Ethnographies of Work where they are introduced to fieldwork skills and introductory sociological concepts that are designed to introduce them to possible majors and eventual career goals. An advising seminar called Learning About Being a Successful Student (LABSS) is linked to the Ethnographies of Work course and provides students with weekly access to their first-year advisor in a group setting where they can work on interpersonal, professional, and academic skills. The New Community College was deliberately designed on a quarter-semester system. The first twelve weeks are dedicated to the aforementioned First-Year Experience courses while the subsequent six weeks are reserved for students to earn additional credits or retake courses they were unsuccessful in. The combined eighteen weeks make up the fall semester so that students are only using financial aid resources
for one rather than two discrete academic terms. In the spring semester, students are enrolled in the second sequence of City Seminar, Statistics, and Ethnographies of Work.

Once students enter the second year they are presented with an option to select one of five programs of study. The New Community College examined labor market and baccalaureate transfer trends to determine which majors would be most beneficial for students who had four-year college or workforce aspirations. The programs of study are: 1) Business Administration, 2) Information Technology 3) Human Services, 4) Urban Studies, and 5) Liberal Arts & Sciences. After the first year, the most popular major was Liberal Arts & Sciences, the major typically chosen by students who desire to transfer once completing their associate degree program. The programs of study resemble the traditional community college experience far more than does the First-Year Experience (FYE). Whereas in the FYE students interacted almost solely with members of their learning community, their experience in the programs of study was markedly different. Each course in the major was organized in a traditional structure with students cycling through classes and interacting with different members of the campus community.

In early 2013, the New Community College at CUNY was given its current name, the Stella and Charles Guttman Community College. With a $15 million gift awarded by the Stella and Charles Guttman Foundation, Guttman Community College entered its adolescence with a number of challenges on the horizon. First, the college community worked toward earning its first regional accreditation. Beginning in 2014, Guttman faculty and administration organized in teams to address the various components of the Middle States accreditation standards. By 2016, the Middle States team organized their site visit and overall report for accreditation for the college. Although
the Middle States accreditation team acknowledged that Guttman was severely constrained by limited space and resources, its mission to increase community college graduation rates was being realized and student learning was thriving. The team noted “the College deserves high commendation for its boldness in adopting the latest and comprehensive research that indicates student success more likely arises from a very focused curriculum with fewer elective choices and with an intentional, hands-on approach to guiding students to completion” (Stout, et al, 2017, p. 25). And even though the team praised the First-Year Experience for its effectiveness in promoting student success, it challenged the college to devise similar models and implement complimentary assessment strategies for the programs of study, an area of the overall curriculum the team believed was less impactful (p. 25). As Guttman’s three-year graduation rate hovers close to 50%, the challenges of the institution will be to evaluate how well the integrative and costly curriculum will be scaled up as it plans to find a permanent home and enroll thousands of additional students.

Comparative Study: Guttman Community College & ASAP at Borough of Manhattan Community College

Why a Comparison? The Guttman Community College and ASAP models are closely interrelated. Each model provides students with structured pathways toward a degree, block scheduling, financial incentives to attend college full-time, and supportive advising. The Guttman Community College model was designed partly from the successes of the implementation of these structural components in the ASAP program. However, one key difference distinguishes the two approaches from one another. The Guttman pedagogical model and integrative curriculum was
designed from best practices across the country and was organized to be an experimental part of the new community college structure. The ASAP model, on the other hand, provides the structural supports located in both programs but is removed from the pedagogy and curriculum. Because the ASAP model was designed to be infused into already established institutions, drastic overhaul of curriculum and academic departmental structures was not possible. The ASAP model also does not admit students requiring more than two subject areas of remediation. As an open admissions community college, Guttman is required by New York State education policy to offer admission to any student with a high school diploma or GED.

The purpose of this comparative study is to understand the impact of the Guttman Community College curriculum on student success compared to that of ASAP. The BMCC ASAP program was chosen as a comparison group because students receive similar support services in both models. Even though the ASAP students do not participate in a specialized first-year curriculum, they are introduced to many of the same structural elements as Guttman students. Because both models require full-time enrollment, students reflect a similar demographic that trends younger. Nationally, there is a diverse range of ages in the community college system. A great deal of work has been done on understanding the non-traditional community college student, specifically students who are older, have children, a full-time job, or are attending a two-year institution later in life to enter a new profession or enhance a skill set in order to be more competitive for a salary increase in their present position. ASAP and Guttman students are likely to have just completed high school, many of whom earned their diplomas from a New York City public high school. A statistical comparison will assist both programs in understanding the efficacy of an experimental high-touch, integrative curriculum.
**The Population.** The sample population for this study was drawn from the 2012-2013 cohort of ASAP students at the Borough of Manhattan Community College and the inaugural class of students at Stella and Charles Guttman Community College. ASAP and Guttman both require that students attend full-time, ASAP throughout and Guttman for at least the first year. 93% of the sample population who remain enrolled are retained as full-time matriculants for the first two years. Since the ASAP program does not permit students requiring three subjects of remediation into its program, the comparison group was generated from students requiring two areas of developmental skills or less upon entry. More specifically, triple remedial students were excluded from the Guttman Community College sample in order to create an appropriate comparison group. After these measures were accounted for an N = 351 represented students in both groups. The BMCC ASAP group totaled n = 146 and the Guttman group totaled n = 205.

For both groups, the average age upon entry was 19. Of these students, there was a slight majority of women over men. In both cases, close to 80% of the population identified as either Black or Hispanic upon entry.
Table 3.14: Distribution of Students by Race, BMCC ASAP & Guttman Community College

Students at Guttman and in the ASAP program represent over 29 countries and 44% speak a language other than English in their home. Close to 40% of their parents were born in a country other than the United States but over 80% of students are citizens of the United States. Students in both groups carry similar financial aid packages. Guttman students received on average $7,624 in total financial aid with $2,469 coming from federal Pell awards and $1,458 from TAP. An additional $4,495 came from tuition remission and other institutional awards. BMCC ASAP students average $6,739 in total annual aid. Of that $4,277 is from federal Pell awards and $2,068 was from TAP. Although total aid packages were similar in both cases, BMCC ASAP students relied more heavily on federal and state aid packages to cover the cost of community college education whereas Guttman students were supported more heavily by grant-funded awards from the institution.
The academic backgrounds of Guttman and BMCC ASAP students in the sample population are also somewhat similar.

Table 3.15: Mean Averages on Regents Exams and High School Grades, BMCC ASAP & Guttman Community College

ASAP students enter the CUNY community college system slightly better prepared academically than do their peers at Guttman. Most notably, Guttman students enter with significantly lower scores in high school mathematics. Students in both groups enter with higher English scores than mathematics scores, an indicator that a larger percentage of students will require developmental skills building in basic math. Average scores on the Algebra Regents exam are far lower than scores on the English Regents. The Guttman Community College Statistics pathway will be a departure from the required BMCC ASAP developmental skills approach where students are evaluated on their scores on the CUNY Elementary Algebra Final Exam (CEAFE). In Spring 2013, Guttman Community College was granted a waiver stating that students completing the
Statistics course successfully would be considered proficient in basic math and would not be mandated to take the CEAFE.

Table 3.16: Percentage of Students Requiring Remediation by Subject Area, BMCC ASAP & Guttman Community College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passed All</th>
<th>Guttman</th>
<th>BMCC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passed Math/Reading</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed Math/Reading Only</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed Math Only</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed Writing/Reading</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed Writing Only</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed Reading Only</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ASAP students enroll at CUNY having successfully completed a greater number of basic skills examinations than their Guttman peers. For both groups, close to 60% matriculate with proficiency in both reading and writing but require developmental skills work in mathematics. Furthermore, BMCC ASAP students were more likely to have completed all their remedial coursework prior to entry, doubling success rates in all three subject areas over Guttman Community College entrants. Although these two case studies compare similar populations of students in terms of race, socioeconomic status, and academic preparedness, one limitation of the study is that as a program within an already established community college, ASAP can be more selective in terms of who it admits while Guttman Community College is required to comply with
open admissions policy and is not legally permitted to have admissions requirements beyond the high school diploma or GED. As policy, ASAP does not permit triple remedials into its program. However, even with these students excluded from the Guttman sample population, ASAP still maintains a higher percentage of students who do not require any additional developmental coursework, an issue Guttman is compelled to contend with.

**BMCC ASAP Evaluation.** Although a number of studies have been conducted that focus on the successes and challenges of the ASAP program, no evaluation to-date has compared the ASAP model to a similar educational experiment such as that offered by Guttman. Prior to comparing ASAP with Guttman Community College, an evaluation of key student success indicators within the ASAP program using predictive statistical analytics will allow for a more nuanced understanding of the sample population within this specialized community college program. In order to understand student learning outcomes within the BMCC ASAP model, descriptive statistics will be generated in order to provide a comprehensive view of student success in terms of credits earned, GPA, retention, and completion. Additionally, ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models will be discussed in relation to credits earned and GPA to understand how specific student variables influence these outcomes. Finally, logistic regression models will be evaluated to understand how these variables predict retention and completion.
Table 3.17: Descriptive Statistics, Population, BMCC ASAP (N=146)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ASAP N</th>
<th>ASAP %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Born</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid Recipient</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remedial</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income &lt; 30K</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed High School &gt; C</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed Regents Math</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are slightly fewer males than females in the ASAP program and more than two-thirds receive at least some financial aid to support their community college education. A small majority of students are born in the United States which parallels the larger community college demographic at CUNY. Of these students, 83% are either Black or Hispanic, 3% White, and 11% Asian. The proportion of Black and Hispanic students in the ASAP program is modestly higher than the total community college average.
Table 3.18: Credits Attempted and Earned by Semester, BMCC ASAP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Mean Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Credits Attempted</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 2</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Credits Earned</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Credits Attempted</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Credits Earned</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 4</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On average, students in the ASAP model finish their second semester nine credits shy of the 30 credits that would be needed to maintain on-time progress toward a two-year degree. Although these credits could be attained in the summer session, financial aid resources would not cover the costs of tuition and fees if students who did not earn thirty credits wanted to graduate in two years. However, a majority of students, according to these averages would be on-track to graduate within the three-year mark, a reasonable marker that is often used by state and federal agencies to determine satisfactory academic progress.

Table 3.19: Cumulative GPA by Semester, BMCC ASAP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Mean GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative GPA</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 2</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative GPA</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 4</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students in the ASAP program maintain relatively high GPAs throughout their time in the community college. These average GPAs indicate that on average students in the ASAP program are maintaining satisfactory academic progress in terms of grades earned. To be considered on
academic probation, a student’s GPA would have to fall below a 2.0. A total of only 27 students fell below the 2.0 mark at the end of the second semester and of those who were still enrolled at the conclusion of the fourth semester only 15 were identified as being on academic probation. Those students who entered the ASAP program with developmental course requirements fell behind their non-remedial peers in overall academic progress.

Table 3.20: Average Cumulative Credits Earned Semesters Two and Four, Remedial/Non-Remedial, BMCC ASAP

Remedial students in the ASAP program complete their second semester with approximately six fewer cumulative credits earned than non-remedial students in the program. The MDRC study mentioned earlier concluded that ASAP students attempted and earned developmental course credits at a higher rate than did their peers in the traditional model. Intensive academic advising coupled with non-traditional academic supports like tutoring geared specifically to ASAP students has proved successful in helping students earn credits at a higher rate. However, within the ASAP
program, students with developmental skills requirements still struggle academically in greater numbers than do their non-remedial peers. Of the ASAP students who required remediation upon entry to the program, the majority required developmental skills hours in basic math. On average, these students were required to enroll in 4.84 hours of math remediation. Of those students who enrolled in developmental math at BMCC, 37% failed their first attempt while 58% passed. Logue, Watanabe-Rose & Douglas (2017) remark that on average 38% of students pass the highest level of remedial mathematics course (p. 79). The evidence from ASAP demonstrates that its intentional support mechanisms support students in completing their developmental work at higher rates. However, many developmental students are still required to complete the course in college algebra, a gatekeeper class whose results remain grim. Even though ASAP proves effective in moving additional students through developmental coursework, questions remain as to whether these outcomes could be improved even more if alternative mathematics pathways were expanded to provide students with greater opportunity for success.
Table 3.21: Average Cumulative GPA Earned Semesters Two and Four, Remedial/Non-Remedial, BMCC ASAP

Of the 23 students who failed the mathematics developmental skills course in their first semester, only 9 remained by the end of the second year. The average GPAs of remedial and non-remedial students are distinctly similar at the conclusion of the second year. Non-remedial student GPAs remain relatively consistent throughout the two academic years while the non-remedial contingent steadily increases. One rationale for this increase relates to dropouts. By semester four, 60% of students who did not pass the remedial math course had left the college. By the end of the second semester, these students had only averaged a 1.85 GPA, below the point considered to be satisfactory academic progress. Once these students left the program after the second semester, the average GPA rose significantly over time, meeting the non-remedial students by the end of the fourth semester.
Overall, ASAP students are retained at high rates after the first year. 82% of the sample population re-enrolled for a second year. The MDRC found that “compared with control [traditional] group students, program [ASAP] group students were around 10 percentage points more likely to enroll in any class during the second semester” (p. 20). For this cohort of ASAP students, 96% returned in the second semester and 82% re-enrolled in the second year. By the conclusion of the second year, 21% of ASAP students graduated with an Associate’s degree. Only 4% of two-year graduates entered into the ASAP program with remedial needs. Additional data from the University will allow for further study on three-year graduation rates and the characteristics of those students.

OLS and logistic regression models provide additional analysis of the influential factors that could contribute to student success in the ASAP program (Appendix A). Although baseline descriptive statistics offer a partial illustration of overall student progress, it is difficult to ascertain how specific predictors related to the student’s ethnic, economic, and academic background work in confluence with one another to predict the outcomes described above. OLS regression models will be used to predict a continuous dependent variable using a set of predictor variables, or covariates. Logistic regression models will be used to predict a binary dependent variable using the same covariates (Appendix B).

ASAP relies on a range of remedial programs to move students through developmental coursework. According to a senior administrator at BMCC, there are presently fifty-two routes through remediation. To attribute success or failure to any one program would be nearly impossible. However, recent trends, particularly in developmental mathematics indicate that
quantitative reasoning and statistics outcomes surpass their algebra counterpart. Overall, there are several consistent trends among students in the ASAP program that contribute to academic success. Upon entry, ASAP students are given a block schedule, an advisor, and a range of financial incentives. These structural supports have proven to increase the rates at which students graduate from the community college and the level of academic success they achieve throughout their time in the two-year institution.

After their first semester, ASAP students are statistically on an even playing field with one another in terms of the number of credits earned except if they require remediation. The impact of being labeled a remedial student has an instantaneous negative impact on the number of credits a student earns in the ASAP program after the first semester. Bailey & Jaggars (2016) note that “one indicator that remedial education is not working properly is that the majority of students drop out before they complete the lengthy pre-requisite course sequence to which they were assigned” (p. 7). Even though ASAP has been credited with helping a greater percentage of students complete their developmental coursework, those students who are defined as remedial upon entry immediately experience credit erosion, a key predictor of early dropout. Community college students who earn credits at a lower rate have a greater probability of eventually losing the financial aid resources that help them pay for their education. If this process of erosion begins upon entry, there is an uphill battle for these students to climb in order to make up the progress lost at the starting point.

By the second semester, additional factors influence the number of cumulative credits students earn. Arum & Roksa (2011) determine that “students from less educated families and African-
American students continue to lag behind” (p. 49) compared to their White and socioeconomically more affluent peers. The data indicate that students in the ASAP program who are born in the United States are prone to higher rates of credit erosion than their non-U.S. born peers. This is a complex but not at all surprising phenomenon. Within the meritocratic and racialized American society, low-income students of color typically fall behind their peers academically. 52% of students in the ASAP program were born and attended school in the United States. Close to two-thirds of these students have either a mother or father who has not earned a college degree. For students of U.S. birth whose parents do not hold a postsecondary degree, socioeconomic as well as sociological factors can be attributed to credit erosion. Levin (2007) writes that “what institutions contribute to students-have little influence upon student outcomes for degree completion or retention at college compared to student effects-that is, individual student characteristics” (p. 26). He follows this with a statement suggesting that students of color do not receive the types of social capital messaging in the home that White students do because there is limited individual interaction with systems of higher education. Since the majority of ASAP parents do not have a college degree, students enrolled in the ASAP program enter with an already ascribed social capital deficit relative to their overall understanding of how to integrate into the higher education system.

Additionally, students who enter the community college are often not familiarized with postsecondary options in high school. Bailey, Jaggars & Jenkins (2016) suggest that “relationships between community colleges and their feeder institutions are generally weak” (p. 54). They explain that limited data sharing between high schools and local community colleges coupled with little background on student academic preparation leave community colleges with little knowledge
about their incoming student body. From a sociological perspective, this disjuncture between the community college and its students creates dissonance that flows both ways. Students bring little social capital regarding how to navigate postsecondary education and institutions understand little about their students’ backgrounds. Although the ASAP program has served as a model for how to reinvent traditional community college education, the structures of the American sociodemographic system are still very much evident even within reform practices.

Table 3.22: Cumulative GPA by High School Average, BMCC ASAP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA Sem 2</th>
<th>GPA Sem 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Above C Average HS</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below C Average HS</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For students in the ASAP program, these patterns continue throughout their time in the community college. Moreover, their earned credits and GPAs in the community college are influenced by their high school grades. Students who earn above a C average in high school accumulate a greater number of credits by the fourth semester than do their counterparts who earn lower high school averages. Yet, by the fourth semester, there is no statistical difference between students who earn below a C average in high school and those who earn higher marks. This observance could be
attributed again to dropouts. Low academic performance in high school is a key predictor of college success. By the fourth semester 54% of students who earned below a C average in high school had left the ASAP program. Furthermore, low-performing high school students struggle academically while they are enrolled. Second and fourth semester mean GPAs indicate that students with poor high school records face academic challenges even within the supportive structure of ASAP. Although ASAP provides substantive relief for students who would ordinarily face challenges in negotiating full-time community college enrollment with extra-institutional pressures such as work and family obligations, students who have historically faced academic challenges continue to struggle in the first two years of the community college (Appendix A).

Kolenovic, Linderman & Karp (2013) note that “after 2 years, 30% of ASAP students had earned a degree, while only 11% of the comparison-group students had done so” (p. 281). The study incorporates a similar set of logistic regression models as does this study. However, several key covariates are different between the two studies. For the 2012-2013 cohort of ASAP students, the main indicators impacting graduation status follow the analytical trends that describe the other dependent variables in this study. First, Kolenovic, Linderman & Karp (2013) do not include remedial status as one of their covariates nor do they include whether or not the student is U.S. born, a predictor that has remained a consistent trend throughout this study. The logistic regression model predicting two-year graduation in the BMCC ASAP program indicates that being remedial and U.S. born has a negative impact on completion. Bailey & Weininger (2002) remark that “foreign-born students earned significantly more credits than the native born students” (p. 3) in a study of CUNY community college demographics and outcomes. They argue that in some cases non-native students arrive at the community college from relatively high social classes in their
country of origin and with a strong academic foundation. Although non-native students require additional language development courses, they are able to “use the community college to strengthen their language skills” and ultimately to “accumulate more credits and are more likely to earn degrees” (p. 3) than their non-native counterparts. Bailey & Weininger (2002) state that in their study non-native students were more likely to earn credits but were not more likely than native students to complete the associate’s degree and ultimately go on to graduate from a four-year college. However, when a non-native student attends a U.S. high school and completes a two-year program, he or she is more likely than the native student to transfer into a baccalaureate program (p. 3). The data from the ASAP program indicate that non-native students are more likely to complete an associate’s degree. In this case, nativity linked with the American socioeconomic system and the U.S. educational system work against community college students in the ASAP program relative to completion. Non-native students circumvent the structural pressures of the American system and move toward completion at higher rates (Appendix B).

A range of studies conclude that the ASAP program has a positive impact on student educational outcomes. Both internal and external evaluations indicate that in comparison to traditional community college students, ASAP students earn more credits and complete their degrees in a shorter amount of time and at higher rates. However, within the ASAP program, certain characteristics are perhaps influencing student educational outcomes. First, and most importantly, remedial status has a negative impact on credit accumulation, GPA, retention, and graduation. Even though ASAP promises to remedy remedial needs early in a student’s education, a remedial classification upon entry negatively effects overall success. Second, U.S. born citizens are at a disadvantage compared to their non-native peers. Nativity seems to suggest that the American
sociodemographic system weighs heavy on underrepresented students in the community college. Lastly, students who do well in high school are more likely to succeed in the community college, a finding that is not surprising but that should be acknowledged. When evaluating students at entry, high school grades appear to be a substantial predictor of academic success in college. A clearer link between high schools and the community college would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of past student performance as they begin a two-year college program.

**Guttman Community College Evaluation.** Stella and Charles Guttman Community College is currently entering its sixth year of operation. Although many early indicators signal that the college is meeting its ambitious goal of raising community college graduation rates, the college has not yet completed an internal or external evaluation study that attempts to analyze the effects of various experimental components of the college’s structure. One of the key differences between the ASAP program and the Guttman Community College model is Guttman’s focus on curriculum and pedagogy. The college’s founding documents designed not only a comprehensive guided pathways model and first-year curriculum designed to offset the need for zero-credit remediation, but it also identified the types of instruction needed to carry out this mission. Pedagogical strategies included: experiential and collaborative learning, the use of electronic portfolios, consistent and intentional reflective practices, supplemental academic support, flipped classrooms, and the use of first-rate technology in the classroom. These instructional practices were adjoined to the experimental educational model with the belief that redesigning the traditional community college experience would provide more fluid pathways for students to complete a two-year degree. On the other hand, the ASAP program integrates students into the mainstream community college
curriculum. Aside from the exclusion of certain applied majors like Nursing, ASAP at BMCC permits students to enroll in any major they choose whereas Guttman only provides five discrete choices. One of the central tenets of the Guttman model is that the focus on pedagogy is critical to a student’s success, particularly those students who typically face barriers in the community college.

Table 3.23: Descriptive Statistics, Population, Guttman Community College (N=205)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Guttman N</th>
<th>Guttman %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Born</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid Recipient</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remedial</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income &lt; 30K</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed High School &gt; C Average</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 205 students in the Guttman Community College sample population, a small majority are female and most are native to the United States. Much like the BMCC ASAP population, over two-thirds of the Guttman population are either Black or Hispanic. Of the 2012-2013 cohort, a large majority of entering students were identified as requiring remediation, a much higher portion than the entering ASAP group. About half of the sample population were dependents of families earning under $30,000 per year and more than two-thirds of these students received some kind of financial aid to attend college.
Table 3.24: Credits Attempted and Earned by Semester, Guttman Community College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Mean Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Credits Attempted</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Credits Earned Semi</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ter 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Credits Attempted</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Credits Earned Semi</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ter 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Guttman Community College semester model is different from the traditional ASAP structure. Guttman students are enrolled in four quarters that, together, make up two semesters. For example, a student begins the fall semester in September and enrolls in courses for twelve weeks. This session is called Fall 1. At the start of the new calendar year, students begin a new set of courses in a six-week session called Fall 2. For financial aid and credit distribution purposes the Fall 1 and Fall 2 sessions merge to create one 18-week semester. The purpose of this arrangement is to allow for students additional time-on-task in the Fall 1 term so that instructors can properly incorporate developmental skills with credit-bearing coursework at an appropriate pace. Since students spend 10.5 hours a week in the City Seminar and earn only 3 credits for the course, the elongation of the fall semester into two components ensures that students will not fall behind while they focus simultaneously on developmental and college-level work. The sample population of students attempted close to the same number of credits as did students in the ASAP program and had earned slightly more than their BMCC peers at the conclusion of the fourth semester.
Table 3.25: Cumulative GPA by Semester, Guttman Community College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Mean GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative GPA Semester 2</td>
<td>2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative GPA Semester 4</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average GPAs for students at Guttman sit slightly below their ASAP peers. However, as an open admissions community college, Guttman enrolls a higher percentage of remedial students than does the ASAP program which is not bound by this policy. The Guttman curriculum was designed to ensure that higher percentages of students would complete the associate’s degree without having to enroll in zero-credit remedial courses. One of the major questions directed to the new college is how well this approach is working and for what population of student the model is best suited.
Table 3.26: Average Cumulative Credits Earned Semesters Two and Four, Remedial/Non-Remedial, Guttman Community College

The gap between the average number of credits earned for remedial and non-remedial students at Guttman Community College is smaller than the difference between the two groups in the ASAP program. Since Guttman does not run any zero-credit remedial courses, it is a bit more difficult to determine how a student achieved proficiency in any of the three subject areas since there is no CUNY-wide record of enrollment in a remedial course. However, internal institutional data provide a comprehensive picture of a student’s trajectory toward proficiency during the first year. Students prove proficiency through the successful completion of traditional CUNY standardized tests. The CUNY Writing Assessment Test, the CUNY Reading Assessment Test, and the basic mathematics CEAFE were all used to determine proficiency for the 2012-2013 cohort. A waiver was granted to the college for the CEAFE after its first year in operation. At present, successful completion of the Statistics course is used as the marker for proficiency in math.
Table 3.27: Average Cumulative GPA Earned Semesters Two and Four, Remedial/Non-Remedial, Guttman Community College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cumulative GPA Semester 2</th>
<th>Cumulative GPA Semester 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remedial 2.3</td>
<td>Remedial 2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Remedial 2.4</td>
<td>Non-Remedial 2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remedial 2.5</td>
<td>Remedial 2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Remedial 2.6</td>
<td>Non-Remedial 2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remedial 2.7</td>
<td>Remedial 2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Remedial 2.8</td>
<td>Non-Remedial 2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although remedial and non-remedial students conclude the first year with relatively similar GPAs, their academic records vary substantially by the end of the fourth semester. Along with the unique educational model, Guttman Community College established a non-traditional grading structure for much of the First-Year Experience. The integration of developmental and credit-bearing coursework prompted a policy decision that gave students a safety net with regards to grading in the first year. If a student was not successful in one of the FYE courses, he or she would receive a grade of NC (No Credit) rather than an F. This would allow the student to retake the course with no negative impact on his or her GPA. The similarities in second semester GPAs between both groups could be attributed to this component of the educational model. After the first year, students earn grades as they would in a traditional community college. The divergent pattern begins after the NC grade for unsuccessful coursework is no longer possible. Alongside this rationale for the variation in mean GPAs, Guttman students who are classified as remedial also drop out of the
college at higher rates than do their non-remedial counterparts, ultimately raising the mean GPA of those still attending by the fourth semester. By the conclusion of the second year, 29% of remedial Guttman students had withdrawn from the college. 78% of those who withdrew from the college by the fourth semester had not achieved proficiency in basic math upon entry. However, although GPAs are somewhat lower for Guttman remedial students, they still earn credits a comparable rate to their non-remedial peers.

**Table 3.28: Proficiency Status by Subject Area at Entry and at Conclusion of First Year, Guttman Community College**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>At Entry</th>
<th>After Year 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A significant percentage of Guttman students entered already proficient in Reading and Writing. Conversely, a remarkably small portion of students entered proficient in mathematics. The introduction of basic mathematics principles as well as skills needed to successfully complete the college algebra standardized test were introduced both in the Statistics class and in the Quantitative Reasoning section of City Seminar. Although math faculty would, in subsequent years, not be
required to deliver algebra-based content for remedial math students, the extended instructional
time available in Guttman’s educational model allowed for a substantial increase in the number of
students proficient by the end of the first year. Although the requirement of the CEAFE was
eliminated after 2013, the increase in available instructional hours coupled with students’ full-time
enrollment were probable catalysts for the demonstrable increase in math proficiency by the end
of the first year.

OLS regression models examining credit accumulation and cumulative GPA illustrate trends that
speak directly to the efficacy of the Guttman model as well as to challenges students within the
institution face as a result of sociodemographic factors (Appendix C). In terms of credit
accumulation, remedial students end the first semester earning fewer credits compared to their
non-remedial peers. During the first semester, 23 remedial students withdrew with anywhere
between 2 and 12 credits. Most remedial students withdrew from either 2 or 3 credits. Conversely,
only 2 non-remedial students withdrew from courses during the first semester. On average,
remedial students attempt 10.7 credits compared to the 12.7 credits attempted by their non-
remedial peers. By the end of the first semester, remedial students earn 9 credits while their non-
remedial classmates earn 11 credits. Half of the remedial students who withdrew from courses in
the first semester did not re-enroll at Guttman in the spring semester. While the first semester
appears to be a serious juncture for remedial students in terms of earned credits and retention, this
pattern dissolves after the fall term. For remedial students who are retained after the first semester
it is just as likely that they will be successful in terms of GPA and credit accumulation as their
non-remedial peers.
It is worth examining the reasons for student attrition in the first semester at Guttman, specifically since remedial status plays a key role in determining outcomes both in credit accumulation and in GPA during the fall term. The Guttman curriculum was designed to increase the number of classroom contact hours a student has in a three-credit course in order to meet the perceived developmental needs while also ensuring that they are earning college credit simultaneously. In the first year, extended “time on task” is a feature of several courses. The first, and perhaps the most profound example of this is the Guttman’s City Seminar. In the first semester, students meet with four instructors in four discrete but interconnected components. Together these components make up one course. The instructors of City Seminar who are also members of an instructional team, or House, meet together and with faculty of the student’s other courses each week to plan lessons, discuss progress, and grade assignments. In City Seminar, students attend three of the four course components twice weekly for ninety minutes and the fourth (academic support space) once for ninety minutes totaling 10.5 hours per week for twelve weeks. To provide a comparison, students in a traditional three-credit community college course would meet with one instructor for 3 hours per week. In order to account for developmental skills building time, Guttman more than triples the amount of time a student spends in the classroom for one course. Additionally, students also enroll in one of two versions of Statistics. Depending on their math proficiency score upon entry, students either take a stretched or unstretched version of Statistics. If they are enrolled in the stretched version, students meet with an instructor for five hours per week in both the Fall 1 and Spring 1 semesters. If they are successful in both components they earn a total of 3 credits for the year-long course. Lastly, first-year students are required to take a course titled Ethnographies of Work I that is linked with a mandatory student advising course called Learning About Being a Successful Student (LABSS). This course requires students to meet for 4.5 hours per week in the
fall and spring semesters. Each successfully completed semester earns students 3 credits. In total, first semester freshman at Guttman spend 20 hours a week in the classroom spanning a total of five days.

Because Guttman is an experimental college whose curricular and pedagogical commitments borrow from a range of best practices nationwide, there is no available data or research indicating how successful designs such as this are in practice. Although the sample population is predominantly made up of remedial students, it is important to note that because a proper comparison was needed, this sample excludes triple remedials. Therefore, when remedial students are discussed in this analysis, they have enrolled requiring only one or two subject areas of developmental skills. Even though only 23 remedial students withdrew from courses in the first semester, this was significant enough to create an impact on overall credit accumulation and GPA.

One possible reason for course withdrawal coupled with student dropout is the daunting reality students face when alerted that they will be required to retake one or more of the first-year courses. If a student is unsuccessful in City Seminar during the fall semester, he or she will re-enroll in the course for a “retake” section in the spring term. The student will have to complete all 10.5 hours weekly for a second time. If a student has to retake multiple courses, the number of hours spent retaking several courses he or she already attended once is a probable cause of reduced motivation to re-enroll. Even though there is no negative impact on a student’s GPA if one of the first-year courses is not completed successfully, the time commitment it would take to retake the course may lead to student attrition. For remedial students already contending with academic challenges, the intensity of the Guttman model may be contributing to the challenges remedial students typically face when entering college.
However, for those students who do remain, the likelihood of successful completion increases, matching that of their non-remedial peers. For the remainder of their time at Guttman, a student’s remedial status does not have any statistical bearing on how many credits they earn, their GPA, whether or not they are retained or if they graduate in two years. At Guttman, females far surpass male students in overall academic success. Leinbach & Bailey (2006) found a similar trend among CUNY community college students. In a study of Hispanic students they determined that “females exhibit increased likelihood of achievement” (p. 21) while enrolled in the community college. The study concludes that Hispanic females are more likely to transfer from the community college and go on to earn a bachelor’s degree (p. 26). At Guttman, female students earn five more credits than do males by the end of the second semester and earn twelve credits more at the end of two years. Moreover, they hold higher GPAs and are more likely to complete a degree in two years. Students who do well in high school surpass their peers with below a C average in credit accumulation, GPA, and completion. Of those students who have below a C average after completing high school, 61% are enrolled in the fourth semester, leaving 38% unenrolled. This compares to a 26% attrition rate for students who earned above a C in high school.

For students at Guttman Community College, being identified as remedial upon entry has a critical impact on retention after the first semester. It is possible that students do not re-enroll because of the significant time commitment it demands to complete Guttman’s intensive first-year curriculum. Females at Guttman outperform their male peers, following trends in national education data that indicate such a phenomenon. Moreover, just as in the ASAP cohort, high school grades appear to be a key predictor of success in the community college, a trend that is
prominent in both institutions and across the same dependent variables. The impact of the Guttman Community College curriculum in relation to the traditional BMCC ASAP curriculum will be evaluated to understand the efficacy of this reform (Appendix D).

Comparing ASAP and Guttman Community College. Binary logistic regression, OLS regression, and propensity-score matching models will be used to understand the relationship between ASAP and Guttman using the variables that have already been described. OLS regression models will be used to determine if Guttman has an impact over ASAP on credit accumulation and GPA. Binary logistic regression models will be used to determine the likelihood that students at Guttman are retained and graduate at higher rates than their peers in the ASAP program at BMCC. Lastly, propensity-score matching will be used to determine the average effect Guttman has on credit accumulation, GPA, retention, and graduation (Appendix E-G).

Since the comparison group is comprised of two subgroups of students who have entered a community college through a decision of their own and with no random assignment, observational data is the only available material for this analysis. The counterfactual model matches cases in the treated and untreated groups on a series of like variables. They argue that “each control subject may be thought of as providing an estimate of what outcome a matched treated subject would have had, if the treated subject had not received the treatment” (p. 6). One method of operationalizing the counterfactual model is through propensity-score matching where matched pairs are made between the comparison groups to generate far more robust analysis of the effect of the treatment on the treated than would a standard regression model. However, for this study, both methods will be described in order to determine if there are similar patterns between the two analytical tools.
Although different patterns are discernible within each discrete institution, both the OLS regression models and the propensity-score matching models do not indicate that Guttman Community College has a more significant impact on the number of credits a student earns or his or her GPA during the first two years. Although remedial students earn far fewer credits than their non-remedial peers in all four semesters in the ASAP program and in the first semester at Guttman, the predictive models indicate that there is not enough of a difference to suggest that Guttman students earn more credits over time than their ASAP counterparts. However, the average number of credits accumulated by both groups signal that many students are on track to graduate in two or three years. One of the critical components of both institutions is the mandatory full-time enrollment requirement. Although Guttman only requires students to remain enrolled full-time in the first year, over 70% remain on full-time status in their second year as well. The Center for Community College Student Engagement (2017) reports that although students who always enroll full-time show increased levels of engagement with instructional material and the culture of the institution, “any experience as a full-time student provides a benefit” (p. 2). At Guttman and in the ASAP program, the emphasis on full-time enrollment positively influences a student’s trajectory toward a two or three-year graduation.

The decision to enroll full-time in a community college is often a daunting one for many students. For some it means the decision to earn a substantially reduced income in favor of attending school full-time. It might also mean attempting to balance family and parenting responsibilities with the demands of a full course-load or sacrificing full-time work in favor of full-time enrollment in the community college. In order to support this decision, both ASAP and Guttman Community
College were designed to offer wraparound services that attempt to offset some of the financial and personal burden associated with full-time enrollment. In both models, students are guaranteed access to in-person advising. ASAP reports a 60:1 and 80:1 student to advisor ratio, depending on perceived student need, and indicates that 95% of students met with their advisor in their first year in the program and “met with an advisor on average 38 times in that period” (p. ES-4). Guttman students are assigned a Student Success Advocate (SSA) upon entry. The SSA serves as the advisor for one House of students, creating an advisor to student ratio of 75:1. During the 2016-2017 academic year at Guttman over 2,400 advising appointments were made across the institution. The high-touch models on both campuses related to advising are complemented by financial incentives that include unlimited MetroCards so that students can easily access public transportation to regularly attend class, textbook stipends, and access to high-speed technology to complete their work. At Guttman, every classroom is equipped with a class set of laptop computers for students to use during class meetings. A student’s promise of full-time enrollment is nurtured by the commitments each institution makes to providing high-level supports to ensure as many students graduate as possible.

First-year retention and attrition patterns appear to reflect the descriptive statistics discussed earlier in this chapter. First-year retention is predicted initially in two sets of logistic regression models. The first looks solely at whether Guttman and the covariates used in this study influence retention. The second evaluates interaction effects where Guttman is paired with the covariates to see if an interaction between the treatment and student characteristics generate a statistically significant treatment effect. The main effects model does not produce any statistical significance on its own. However, when Guttman is interacted with each of the covariates there is a statistically significant
probability that students at Guttman are less likely to be retained after the first-year than students in the ASAP program. Although Guttman ended the 2012-2013 academic year with a high retention rate, a propensity-score matching analysis also predicted that Guttman students were less likely to be retained in comparison to their peers in ASAP. Based on the previous discussion regarding the Guttman curriculum, it is possible that students who are not successful in one or more courses in the ASAP program did not find retaking a single three-credit course as daunting as a student at Guttman might who would be required to retake a substantial number of contact hours the subsequent semester. Both institutions record over a 70% first-year retention rate which presents as an incredible accomplishment for two community college reform initiatives. This achievement reflects a 10% gain over the average two-year college retention rate at CUNY.

Finally, the logistic regression and propensity-score models both indicate that Guttman students are more likely than are their ASAP peers to graduate in two years. Although ASAP provides similar structural supports as Guttman, one key difference is that Guttman was designed on what Thomas Bailey calls a “guided pathways model.” The ASAP program housed at BMCC exists within what Bailey, Jaggars & Jenkins (2015) call the “cafeteria model” where curriculum and degree requirements are often constructed from “complex and ill-defined pathways” (p. 13). BMCC ASAP students are permitted to enroll in most of the college’s 47 majors. And though ASAP students receive far more academic advising than do traditional students, navigating a complex series of degree requirements where developmental coursework is, in some cases, separated from credit-bearing work. Bailey, Jaggars & Jenkins (2015) remark that “the current system of developmental education is hampered by inadequate placement information, lengthy prerequisite sequences, and, in many cases, uninspiring instruction” (p. 15).
One of the hallmark components of the guided pathways at Guttman is how developmental education integrates with credit-bearing coursework. Within the guided pathways model, “developmental education is redesigned as a critical ‘on-ramp’ to a college-level program of study, with the goal of helping students successfully complete the critical introductory college-level classes in their initial field of interest” (p. 17). At Guttman, the pathway toward graduation is clear from a student’s first meeting with an admissions counselor. Integrated developmental coursework ensures that students will receive the proper support they need, particularly in the first year, allowing for degree requirements to be clearly spelled out prior to enrollment. Guttman’s limited number of majors allows for students to make less complicated decisions about their intended program of study and offers advisors an opportunity to clearly and methodically navigate students through course selection each semester. The guided pathways model was operationalized at Guttman Community College specifically to increase community college graduation rates at CUNY. The models presented in this study indicate that the way the Guttman educational model and curriculum are designed within this framework is ensuring that the college meets its goals in the formative years of the institution. ASAP has made great strides in graduating higher proportions of students over the traditional model. However, ASAP provides structural supports for students but has not yet engaged in curricular reform or intervention of any kind. ASAP does provide students with tutoring, particularly those who have remedial needs. ASAP students, though, enroll in mainstream academic courses and are not obliged to participate in the type of first-year coursework required of Guttman students. The data indicate that although each institution provides much-needed support and opportunity for its students, it is probable that the
guided pathways model, complete with an integrative developmental curriculum is more effective in helping students graduate.

**Hearing from the Students**

Four students met on a September afternoon at Guttman Community College in Midtown Manhattan. Each had been recruited through already established relationships made by the researcher. Over lunch, two Guttman students and two ASAP students were asked to share their experiences in their respective programs. The hour-long conversation evolved into a dialogue with students engaging sharply with one another about the similarities and differences in their respective colleges. The participants came from very different backgrounds. The first was a young man who had, the year prior, enrolled in the BMCC ASAP program just after completing his high school degree. After two months of classes, he dropped out. His story of a rapid entry and exit was dominated by an experience with a Friday night remedial algebra class. After a year away, he re-enrolled the following year and returned to the ASAP program, this time working closely with an advisor who helped him navigate that campus. The second BMCC ASAP student was a young woman who recently completed her Liberal Arts degree at BMCC and transferred to CUNY’s City College. This young woman served as a peer mentor for the ASAP program and was involved in policy discussions regarding how best to expand the services ASAP provided on her campus. She entered BMCC ASAP requiring remediation in mathematics and enrolled in a five-week immersion program prior to her first semester to complete this requirement. The third student was a young man who was beginning his second year at Guttman Community College. He was also beginning his first year as a peer mentor for Guttman’s First-Year Experience. This young man entered Guttman requiring remediation in both reading and mathematics. He successfully
completed both requirements by the end of his first year. The fourth student was a young woman who graduated from Guttman in 2016 and now works for the financial aid office at the college while attending Brooklyn College full-time. This young woman entered Guttman requiring remediation in all three subject areas. She also noted that she was pregnant with her first child at the beginning of her first year. She successfully graduated in two years and is now a Childhood and Youth Studies major at Brooklyn College.

During the discussion, three key themes emerged as markers of each student’s experience:

1. **Critical importance of relationships to their success.**

2. **Intrinsic value of credit accumulation.**

3. **Desire to finish, and finish fast.**

Separately these narratives are compelling and illustrate students’ basic desire to succeed and complete the requirements of their degrees. However, when discussed in concert with one another, these themes reflect key areas where focused policy reform can be implemented. Key reform initiatives are often criticized as emerging from administrative priorities to lower overhead cost and increase efficiency while enrolling substantially larger freshmen classes each year. While this may be a valid argument in some cases, there are attempts at reform that can be focused on nuanced but critical areas of the student experience. At CUNY, the ASAP program and Guttman Community College have each placed substantial fiscal resources into ensuring that the student experience is embraced by supportive advisors, faculty, and support professionals who provide the necessary wraparound services required by many community college students. Although ASAP has made strides in providing structural supports, Guttman Community College is an exemplary model of an institution that has fully developed a co-requisite model of developmental education so that students are earning credits upon entry. Both Guttman and ASAP have incorporated
elements like block scheduling and proactive advising to ensure that students are afforded an opportunity to finish their degrees on-time and transfer to a four-year college if they so desire. Guttman Community College has taken this notion a step further by implementing a guided pathways model with limited degree options and few elective choices so that students are clearly positioned to finish their required credits within two years if they are successful in each of their courses. Interestingly, much of the dialogue among the students identified the community college in which they were enrolled as a site of personal remediation where attitudes, skills, and experiences were reorganized in preparation for transfer to a senior college. While many postsecondary reformers search for imaginative ways to eliminate the stigma of zero-credit remediation, the community college remains an important step for many high school graduates who feel they need time to align their own objectives with what is required to earn a bachelor’s degree. For students at Guttman and in the ASAP program at BMCC, the community college served as an accelerant to their ultimate aspirations.

**Critical Importance of Relationships to Success**

Over a hundred-year history, the community college has emerged as a comprehensive institution, often designed with multiple missions and competing purposes. Dougherty (2001) remarks that “the community college is quite contradictory in its effects” (p. 66), believing that it can serve as an enormous asset and access point for some while also acting as a barrier to others. One of the most significant differences between Guttman Community College and the ASAP program at BMCC is size. In 2012, BMCC enrolled close to 9,000 new freshmen putting its total population just shy of 30,000 students. Comprehensive community colleges like BMCC are widely popularized for providing access to a host of students who could not otherwise attend college based
on high school academic records or lack of financial resources. However, ensuring that each student is prepared to handle the bureaucratic systems of financial aid, registration, and degree completion becomes an improbable task for advisors who, in many instances, are assigned to 1,000 students. Additionally, developmental skills classes where many students first enroll are often taught by contingent, or part-time, faculty who are not intimately connected to the professional fabric of the department in which they teach. Although individual students may develop close relationships with advising staff or instructors, the ethos of the institution is not one focused on relationship-building.

Guttman Community College and the ASAP program were designed with relationships at the center of their educational missions. From a policy perspective, it could appear that the goals of these programs are purely utilitarian, focused only on raising graduation rates but underneath that effort is critical attention to human development and an understanding that interpersonal interaction is key to overall success. Students who participated in the focus group echoed this sentiment in each of their stories. In many cases, relationships were formed and sustained through an acknowledgement of trust. Throughout the dialogue, students moved through a narration of contradictory experiences. They sifted through memories and emotions where they felt detached from their own education, where the professor failed to learn their names, times when they had no access to an advisor to help them make decisions about classes and finances, and when it felt like they were on their own to struggle through a class or drop out. In turn, each student also developed a clear picture of what a college experience built on trust and intimacy looked like. One student remarked that at Guttman “professors got personal but not too personal where it was invasive. But, for students like myself, we confided in our professors.” For the two Guttman students, the
extended number of hours in the semester schedule offered a unique opportunity to build sustained relationships with faculty who would otherwise teach a course and move to a new group of students. For one of these individuals, this meant developing a close, personal relationship with her first-year faculty as she worked through coursework during a pregnancy. She poignantly states that the Guttman model is “interconnected and personal but in a helping way.” During her pregnancy, this student worked closely with professors, many of whom served as instructor for a series of courses in her first year. The consistency in interaction with key faculty nurtured sustained relationships that afforded this particular student an opportunity to modify her workload and communicate with her instructors on a personal level during the time of her daughter’s birth so that she would not fall behind in her coursework. Although a focus on wraparound student support services was incorporated into the Guttman model to improve graduation rates, the impact of this effort is far from utilitarian. Certainly a focus on relationships improves a student’s chance of overall success, but does far more to influence the experience a student has with the institution and his or her own growth as an individual and learner.

The ASAP program falls closely in line with the successes of the Guttman model in terms of how students feel about their connections to faculty and staff. As the early studies of ASAP articulate, the radical shift in student advising practices have been critical in changing the traditional community college experience at CUNY. Although the ASAP program has, for the last ten years, operated as a program within already established institutions, the student experience has been enhanced by assigning individuals to advisors with whom they can meet on a regular basis and who provide wraparound supports. One ASAP students remark that “advisors are so caring” and that as she continued her studies as part of the program she noticed that the “advisors were like
family” who were always available and were consistently focused on her success. At Guttman and in the ASAP program, the focus on relationships and advising cascades down from staff to student. Framed by positive interactions with advising staff, some Guttman and ASAP students apply to be Peer Mentors who are employed to serve as an additional layer of support for students. This student describes a positive experience in serving as a Peer Mentor, but her comments regarding ASAP’s impact on institutional policy are prescient. She states that “at BMCC the admissions office and the financial aid office do not communicate. They don’t know who each other are. But then at ASAP, it’s more like go to this place, go to that place. One of the ASAP coaches said that he wanted us to get more involved with other BMCC staff like student government and student activities.” As students become Peer Mentors as a result of their interactions with advising staff, they serve as additional ambassadors from ASAP to the institution-at-large. These interactions spread to other departments, allowing ASAP students to feel more connected to the various, often disparate components of a vast institution. As Guttman Community College continues to grow, its early focus on relationships as a central operating mission will no doubt benefit its strategic plan for scaling an educational model that provides a nurturing atmosphere for its students.

Intrinsic Value of Credit Accumulation

There exists a discernible divide between the experiences of remedial students in the ASAP program compared to those who enroll at Guttman Community College. Although each student entered his or her respective program requiring at least some remediation, their experiences diverged based on where they enrolled. For BMCC ASAP students, entering as a remedial student meant enrolling in one or more zero-credit courses in their first year. One student, who eventually
dropped out of the ASAP program after enrolling in a remedial math course, describes his experience and ultimately why he re-enrolled after a year off. This young man narrates a story many other young people who enter a CUNY community college after high school relate to their friends and instructors early in the fall semester. Often the question arises of “why did you decide to come to college?” For many, it seemed to be a requirement. For many more, the choice of a community college over a four-year institution was settled early on in high school by low grades, lackluster advising, and an internal ethos that separated them from the possibility of earning a bachelor’s degree. For this student, BMCC was the logical next step but not at all a desirable one. His story is complex and he remarks that college was something “everyone else was doing” but that he had a “lot going on at the time” and noted that “I thought I could do everything and I couldn’t. I was not motivated to show up.” He was required to enroll in a Friday evening remedial math course that met for four hours once a week. After listening to the other students describe their experiences of relationships built with their instructors and advisors during the first year, he remarked that he had experienced none of that during his first attempt at college the previous year. In the first two months of school, this student felt as many other remedial students do, that he was attending class for no reason. There was no light at the end of the Friday night tunnel. He figured he was going to fail so he dropped out. Even though this young man was a part of the ASAP program during this first year, the realities of remediation set in quickly. For him, there seemed to be no clear path toward completion. Many community college students enter remedial programs with already complex lives and varied experiences with secondary education. Remediation, for some, serves as an extension of already soured high school years. Recasting this experience for entering freshmen is critical to their success. The central mechanism for altering the remedial experience is ensuring that students are earning credits as soon as the first semester. Although
students enter with complex relationships to their own academic identities and to educational institutions, earning credits affords them a chance at renewal, to visualize progress, and to absorb the needed motivation to move forward.

For Guttman students, remediation is a term many are unfamiliar with. Whereas students requiring remediation in the ASAP program are largely still forced to register for zero-credit courses, Guttman students are enrolled in credit-bearing coursework in the first semester regardless of remedial status. Students recognize the unique complexity of and time commitment required to face the mammoth First-Year Experience but also understand that the immediacy of credit accumulation is necessary to their success. However, one student acknowledged that even though credits were earned, the amount of time spent in class to earn those initial credits was incredibly cumbersome. He states, “there is a pattern here, since we are talking about Guttman, of us doing a lot of work for a lot of time for under the amount of credits that we deserve. That makes me feel so frustrated.” Although the data indicate that co-requisite models for providing developmental education, particularly in a community college student’s first year are far more successful than traditional, detached remedial programs, the logistical details for how these programs are constructed are incredibly important to understand. For Guttman students, the integration of developmental and credit-bearing coursework is central to the college’s mission and has emerged as a demonstrable contributor to the institution’s flourishing graduation rates. However, in many cases, the student experience is frustrated by the excess time-on-task. Although ASAP students who are identified as requiring remediation upon entry are often discouraged by zero-credit developmental courses, they were surprised to hear that their Guttman peers were required to spend
so much time in class. Policy recommendations found later in this manuscript will offer possible solutions to these concerns.

**Desire to Finish, and Finish Fast**

For each student who participated in this discussion, the goal of attending community college was to leave the institution as quickly as possible. A wealth of literature in the past ten years has pointed to graduation rates as one of the sole measures of success for community colleges. Policy initiatives have attempted to alter traditional paradigms. In almost every case, the focus has been on increasing the number of students who earn an associate’s degree from a two-year college. Critics of these reforms have cited the utilitarian mission of graduating more students as an exercise in institutional efficiency, a bow to reduced state funding, and a convergence with lean practices employed by businesses. However, these critiques do not, perhaps, reflect the desires of community college students who view their time in the two-year college as a time of personal remediation and academic reclamation. The community college itself is not an end point but rather a means to an end. With this in mind, the Guttman and ASAP models are designed to organize the academic experience in a manner that clearly defines the pathways by which a student reaches degree completion. ASAP, however, relies on the expertise of the advisor to ensure the student moves through his or her major without confusion. Guttman Community College opened with an already established guided pathways model in place. By removing the possibility of a student earning expensive excess credits by taking erroneous electives or major-hopping, the Guttman model provides a structured path toward completion. For many students across CUNY, the entry-level mathematics requirement is often a substantial barrier to on-time completion and far outweighs other requirements in contributing to protracted time-to-completion or dropout.
Students describe substantial differences in experience between the Guttman and ASAP models in terms of how they achieved proficiency in basic math.

Returning to the student who, earlier, described his experience in a Friday night remedial algebra course, we are again confronted with a precarious academic situation where the most vulnerable students are corralled in an obscure, four-hour long, zero-credit course that does not contribute to their major or degree requirements. For most students at BMCC, even those who enroll in the ASAP program, remedial algebra is the gateway course to credit-bearing classes in their majors. Without it, there is little chance of graduating. A few subway stops north in Midtown Manhattan, freshmen at Guttman Community College are enrolled in an alternative mathematics course in basic Statistics. At BMCC, the student enrolled in the Friday night algebra course remarks “I registered a week before we came in. I know now that this was super late but I was left with a four-hour remedial math course on Friday night. Everyone in the class ranged in age from 18-40 and no one wanted to be there.” The student described a teacher who was challenging to relate to linguistically and pedagogically. The class, as he stated, was organized around the “textbook in his hand, writing things on the board.” In the room, “everyone was quiet and falling asleep.” For remedial students, the combination of the complexities of learning algebra with passive pedagogy in this Friday night course created the conditions for this student to abandon his academic pursuits. At Guttman, the Statistics pathway offers students an opportunity to explore real-world scenarios using basic statistics as a framework for solving complex problems. As is with most classes at Guttman, the pedagogy is focused on hands-on, experiential learning rather than passive recitation. One student describes her experience in the Statistics course in direct contrast to the Friday night algebra section. She says, “at Guttman, this wasn’t the case. My experience was so hands-on. It
was like, here is what we are going to do in the textbook but how can we do it to keep you guys motivated. And, a lot of the stuff was connected to basketball, softball, anything we wanted to know about.” For many students, the Statistics course stretches over an entire academic year. The extended, or stretched, course gives instructors the time to work through multiple case studies with students relative to a particular statistical operation. Rather than simply reciting information from a textbook, students are given the type of pedagogical attention needed to ensure their success. The alternative mathematics pathway is critical to Guttman’s heightened graduation rates. As was previously mentioned, only 30% of CUNY students who enroll in a remedial algebra course elsewhere in CUNY pass the course and are afforded an opportunity to enter their major coursework. Of the 70% who do not complete the course, many drop out far before graduation. Although the completion of the basic math requirement is not the only stumbling block for students, there are an array of experiences that complement the data illustrating a trend that pairs the traditional basic math sequence with lowered completion rates. And, for the students who participated in this discussion, the community college is mainly important as a conduit to a four-year institution. For many more, the basic math requirement acts as a barrier to their own potential. Guttman Community College’s Statistics pathway coupled with the institution’s focus on experiential and hands-on pedagogy has afforded a greater number of students an opportunity to engage with their major coursework in preparation for completion and transfer within a reasonable timeframe.

The dialogue among the students who participated in this focus group serves as compelling supporting evidence to the statistical findings presented in an earlier chapter. Their experiences interlace many of the nuanced concerns that arise from the data. What is clear is that both Guttman
Community College and the ASAP program have made major advances in community college education by focusing on how to build relationships between students, faculty and staff. Additionally, the ethos of the community college has shifted in the past ten years. Although two-year colleges have always been a point of transfer for some students, this phenomenon has increased substantially in recent years as community college demand has grown. Programs like ASAP and Guttman Community College have responded to this need, recognizing that by ensuring a student efficiently moves through the two-year program, he or she has a greater likelihood of successfully completing a four-year degree program without running out of financial aid. Investing in alternative mathematics pathways and integrated co-curricular developmental education models will be key to the overall success of entering community college students at CUNY. Even though Guttman and ASAP have established successful models, each program has facets that require further research and evaluation to determine their long-term effectiveness. The concluding chapter examines some possibilities for further reform.
Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Conclusion

For over fifty years, the City University of New York has been on the leading edge of experimentation and reform within the American public higher education system. Throughout its history, CUNY has attempted to provide access to postsecondary education to an enormously socioeconomically, racially, and ethnically diverse city. During the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, students, faculty, and administrators recognized that the university could no longer remain an isolated academic enterprise, available only to white New Yorkers. The tenor of the era ushered in the demand for reform, one that focused on the demographic restructuring of the institution to reflect the city itself. Early programs like SEEK sought to slowly integrate the growing population of Black and Puerto Rican students in the community into the mainstream four-year colleges. Although the SEEK program served as an important overture to integration, students and local activist politicians insisted on complete structural overhaul to allow the full integration of students of color. CUNY administrators, under the leadership of Chancellor Albert Bowker, attempted to assuage public concern by offering plans for the 1975 implementation of Open Admissions at CUNY. Under the provisions of the plan, all local high school students would be guaranteed a seat at one of the CUNY colleges. Yet, as the 1960s came to a conclusion and racial protests became ever more intense and heated at CUNY and beyond its gates, it was clear to Chancellor Bowker that the implementation date had to be moved up in order to quiet the violence. Hastily, and without proper preparation or planning, open admissions was implemented in the fall of 1970. Enrollments increased by 24,000 that year and faculty were confronted with a range of academic abilities and many students who required focused remediation in reading, writing, and math before they could enroll in credit-bearing courses (Picciano & Jordan, 2017, p. 50).
The events leading up to open admissions are representative of policies that generated an era of expansion at CUNY. Racial conflicts on the campuses propelled the central administration and local politicians to hasten the timetable for implementation. The open admissions decision was a wholesale restructuring of enrollment as well as academic policy. During this period, and throughout the decades that followed, CUNY attempted to provide postsecondary education to an academically diverse student population but did so with little understanding of how these students learned best and what they needed to learn most. The struggle with remedial education, low graduation rates, and educating a complex body of students remained central to CUNY’s story through to the turn of the century. Through the late 1990s, the University’s reputation as a leading system of public higher education fell sharply. Reports of academic mismanagement and data indicating plummeting student success rates reshaped the image of CUNY as one of low expectations and high overhead costs. By the turn of the century, a newly appointed Board of Trustees determined that a sharp change in leadership and direction was required to restore CUNY’s national image to what it was before the period of open admissions.

Matthew Goldstein was appointed Chancellor of the City University of New York in 1999 at a time when its national reputation had reached an historic low. After the publication of Benno Schmidt’s *An Institution Adrift* report that offered a scathing view of CUNY’s operations and outcomes, Chancellor Goldstein vowed to restore the public image of and confidence in the university. Central to Chancellor Goldstein’s plan to restructure the university was to remove remedial programs from the senior colleges in order to strengthen admissions standards and recruit competitive students into the baccalaureate programs. After decades of open admissions policy in
the four-year institutions, the significant alteration to the academic enterprise fueled opposition from many faculty and local politicians argued that the new administration was attempting to reshape the demographic landscape of CUNY, limiting access for underrepresented groups in favor of increasing the university’s national competitive edge. Although the conflict gained momentum as the 20th century waned, Chancellor Goldstein and the Board of Trustees were able to secure this significant policy objective by 2000. Over the next two years, a slow but organized phasing-out of remedial programs from the senior colleges ushered in a new era of academic focus at the community colleges where these programs were now solely housed. Moreover, this significant restructuring of the CUNY mission represented a moment of contraction where admissions standards for some of the four-year colleges were sharply raised and competition between student applicants intensified for the first time in over forty years. This period of contraction reorganized the components of the university and drew distinct boundaries both academically and socio-demographically between the community and senior colleges. Although the doomsday scenario of plummeting enrollments at the senior colleges following the removal of remedial programs that many predicted would become reality never materialized, the socioeconomic and racial landscape across the campuses shifted significantly over the subsequent ten years. Ultimately, students of color from low-income communities and low-performing high schools were directed to the community colleges where they were required to enroll in varied levels of developmental education courses before gaining access to credit-bearing work. For community college faculty and administrators, the relationship between developmental education and low completion rates for this student population emerged as a source of great concern, particularly as the recession era prompted additional accountability measures for public institutions as a result of flagging budgets. During the economic downturn and in the years following, CUNY engaged in a period of academic
reform directed at improving completion rates in the community colleges. Recognizing that remedial programs were largely responsible for eroding student financial aid packages and acting as barriers to graduation, faculty and administrators employed recently conducted research on developmental education reform, creating programs and institutions designed to restructure the community college experience. The Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) and Stella and Charles Guttman Community College are two examples of reform-based initiatives that emerged out of this period. Each of these programs has achieved measurable results toward the goal of increasing community college graduation rates. However, with several years of evidence now available it is now clear that each of these initiatives is reaching a point where additional revisions to their original models are necessary in order to strengthen their missions and extend opportunities to greater numbers of students.

Policy Recommendations

This study has provided both intra-program and comparative data for ASAP and Guttman Community College. Although these initiatives have similar structural components, they also have several key differences. These points of difference suggest critical ways each initiative can learn from the other. The ASAP program and Guttman Community College are preparing for a period of expansion. In the fall semester of 2018, the ASAP program is poised to begin its overhaul of Bronx Community College which will become the first, full ASAP-based college in the country. Under the direction of Tracy Meade, a principal architect of the Guttman Community College startup operation, Bronx Community College will offer an ASAP-based structure to over 20,000 students. Additionally, Guttman Community College has reached enrollment capacity at its temporary Bryant Park campus. Because of space constraints, students in the programs of study
meet in classrooms at the West 31st Street campus of the CUNY School of Professional Studies. In the coming five years, Guttman and CUNY administrators will focus on identifying and moving into a permanent facility in Manhattan so that it can continue to increase enrollment and provide access to scores of additional students.

This study has produced two key policy recommendations, one for the ASAP program and one for Guttman Community College. While there are many more evidence-based findings that could be discussed, the policy recommendations that will be presented here are designed with growth in mind. Continued longitudinal studies will be both necessary and useful for understanding trends in student and institutional outcomes.

**Recommendation #1: Align ASAP Structures & Curricular Reform**

The experience of Guttman Community College has shown that a co-requisite model along with focused high-impact practices in the first-year can create an academic pathway where remedial and non-remedial students are, over time, afforded the same probability of success. Although the ASAP program has demonstrated enormous success over traditional community college programs, remedial students still struggle to accumulate credits largely because developmental programs remain detached from the mainstream curriculum. CUNY has made great strides in experimenting with co-requisite developmental courses in recent years, but organizational change of this nature is slow to take hold. However, as ASAP enters a period of institutional expansion, it is worthwhile to underscore the great opportunities available to students when the ASAP model is paired with substantive curricular reform at the colleges where ASAP operates.
One of the most significant barriers to change in the community college curriculum at already established institutions will be determining how to integrate historically detached developmental skills departments into the mainstream curriculum and, in turn, how to restructure traditional academic departments and their curricula to provide the types of learning available in the Guttman model. Recognizing that dramatic institutional change is organizationally unhealthy for both faculty and students, curricular redesign along with ASAP’s continued growth and implementation must be integrated slowly and methodically. First, the number of pathways out of remediation would benefit from consolidation. It is appropriate to mention again that at BMCC there are currently 52 possible ways out of remediation. Not only are dozens of pathways out of developmental coursework challenging for students to understand and move through, the complexity of managing these multiple initiatives presents both academic and administrative difficulties for the college. Based on prior research and successes at institutions like Guttman, pathways through remediation should be consolidated into a standardized program based on a co-requisite model. Bailey, Jaggars & Jenkins (2015) suggest that “the majority of students referred to developmental education drop out before completing their assigned sequence-either because they fail a course or because they simply do not enroll in the next course in the sequence” (p. 132). The data presented in this study indicate that ASAP students who are identified as remedial upon entry are subject to credit erosion by the end of the first semester, lagging behind their non-remedial peers in velocity toward degree. Thomas Bailey and his team offer a solution to this problem. They argue that a co-requisite model could be responsible for “blurring the distinction between college-ready and developmental students and to integrating remedial supports into college-level coursework” (p. 134). This approach is central to Guttman’s first-year curriculum.
As ASAP begins the process of expanding onto entire college campuses, traditional developmental programs will require structural overhaul in order students to access co-requisite courses.

Yet, campus leadership will no doubt be left with the question of how to create this change. While Guttman had the benefit of opening with a co-requisite model in place, already established institutions will find this significant alteration to the academic infrastructure far more complicated. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Any shift will require leadership from both faculty and administrative constituencies and will benefit from a slow integration. Borrowing from the Guttman success, however, there exists a possible starting place for future ASAP-based institutions. For already established institutions, the most obvious source to begin a reform-based project slowly is within the academic departments and programs of study. Rather than attempting to overhaul the curriculum of the entire institution in one sitting, leadership will have to begin the process of co-requisite and guided pathways conversion within each academic program. It would be advisable to map a student’s journey from developmental education in the first year to graduation, as the Guttman founders did. Throughout this process, members of developmental skills faculty should join colleagues in the programs of study in determining how to best integrate basic skills into introductory courses. For administrators, issues of faculty workload, course credit hours, and degree requirements will require reworking as the process unfolds. Eventually, a roadmap through the major complete with co-requisite developmental skills courses will be infused with the structural components the ASAP program has already determined to be successful. As each major is completed, the infrastructure and culture of the college will be transformed with guided pathways through each major as the central architecture for student academic success.
Recommendation #2: Consolidate Guttman First-Year Curriculum to Reduce Attrition & Increase Success

The Guttman Community College educational model has offered CUNY and the nation’s community colleges a lens into the possibilities for significant reform in developmental skills programs. When the college was designed, a focus on increased seat time or time-on-task served as one of the critical components necessary to justify the removal of zero-credit remedial programs. However, the data from this study underscore a problem that faculty and administrators at Guttman are already contending with. Struggling students in the first year who are unsuccessful in the 10.5 contact hour City Seminar course are more likely to leave the college rather than attempt to retake the course. For those who do retake the course, such a monumental task sets them behind their peers even if they are successful in the second attempt. The Guttman co-requisite model, however, is successful in equalizing the playing field of success for those students who do complete the first-year experience. The question for Guttman faculty and administrators is how to best maintain the co-requisite model while also ensuring that students who are unsuccessful in their first attempt are retained and given a manageable opportunity to succeed on the second try.

Alongside the attrition issue in the first year, courses like City Seminar are incredibly complex and expensive to run. As Guttman prepares for expansion, appropriate fiscal responsibility will be required to ensure that the maximum number of students are able to access the college’s supports while ensuring the institution can work within its resources. City Seminar is perhaps the best example of a co-requisite model that is both highly successful and logistically burdensome. While the New College Concept Paper, the college’s founding document, views additional classroom time as central to student success, the data indicate that for some students, particularly those who
are unsuccessful on the first attempt, seat time can effectively serve as a barrier. Bailey, Jaggars & Jenkins (2015) provide many successful examples of a co-requisite, guided pathways approach to community college education. They indicate that their research results lead them toward “a policy in which the majority of developmental students are referred to a co-requisite program with an integrated student support section” (p. 135) but do not specify how many hours a student should spend in an integrated course. Remedial students in the ASAP program offer a compelling case for the need to move toward a co-requisite model so that developmental skills are properly integrated with credit-bearing coursework. However, at Guttman, the number of contact hours within this approach also deters student success. Guttman students enter college with clear developmental skills needs in the area of basic math. Moreover, as a Hispanic-serving institution, Guttman is poised to enroll students who require additional English skills that will prepare them for college-level work. The City Seminar course is already equipped to give students an opportunity to engage with both math and basic English. However, the time spent in these areas is particularly protracted. To focus on the developmental skills most students require, City Seminar could be pared down to two rather than four components. Rather than students attending Critical Issue, Quantitative Reasoning, Reading & Writing, and the academic support space Studio, an alternative model would require students to attend Critical Issue and Quantitative Reasoning. This would reduce the total contact hours for City Seminar from 10.5 to 6 hours per week. The elimination of the Reading & Writing component is not suggested without careful consideration. The rationale for the removal of this specific section stems from the developmental skills embedded in the remaining two components. Both the Critical Issue section and the Quantitative Reasoning section require that students engage in ongoing writing exercises focused on analysis and basic skills like notetaking. The remaining two components can potentially address the
developmental needs students may have in basic English without the addition of the Reading & Writing component. Additionally, the elimination of the academic support space, Studio, will permit students time to engage in focused tutoring now offered by the college. The Concept Paper leaned away from tutoring and more toward integrative academic support systems. However, over time, the college learned that its students required varied levels of focused academic support that benefited from the assistance of tutors in a range of academic subject areas. With the reduction of required seat time in City Seminar alongside its retained focus on integrated developmental skills, students would be afforded an opportunity to work on basic skills areas in class as well as individually with tutors. The current model attempts to address developmental skills needs through added seat time but has reached a point where students find benefit in additional one-on-one tutoring. This alternative approach will allow for both to happen fluidly and simultaneously.

Several logistical issues would arise if this proposal were implemented. First, Guttman is committed to organizing students and faculty into learning communities. The House structure, as it is called, would be retained under this model. Each of the four cohorts within a specified House would attend the City Seminar components, Ethnographies of Work, LABSS, and Statistics together as they do now. However, as a result of the consolidation of City Seminar, additional time in the schedule would be available for students to receive one-on-one tutoring which has increased in demand since the college opened and which would allow faculty to have additional time to meet with students individually about their work. This is time that, for now, is unavailable due to the highly-structured timetable. Additionally, this consolidation would also allow for the college to make better use of its physical space until it can secure a permanent home. The complexities of the cohort model make assigning classrooms and faculty schedules immensely
difficult. This logistical breathing room would provide much-needed relief to an overtaxed physical plant. Lastly, the reduction in City Seminar components would allow Guttman to refocus on one of its original missions, which was to create a campus environment where full-time faculty provided most of the instruction. Guttman has attempted to balance the percentage of full-time faculty teaching in the first-year with those teaching in the programs of study. As priorities have oscillated, so have staffing trends. The consolidation of the City Seminar course into two components would not eliminate the need for adjunct faculty, but would reduce the reliance on part-time instructors by increasing the percentage of full-time faculty members teaching in the FYE and in the majors.

The ASAP model provides substantive evidence that supportive academic and financial services can catalyze community college student success. The Guttman model, however, provides an additional layer to this potentiality. A comprehensive curriculum, particularly in the first year, that focuses on the blending of developmental and credit-bearing coursework can offer similar pathways to success for both remedial and non-remedial students. With this in mind, it is also necessary to find a balanced approach where students who are not successful are able to retake courses as necessary without the burden of sitting through excessive contact hours for the second time. Moreover, a reduced number of contact hours in the Guttman FYE could eliminate potential student burnout and provide opportunities for individuals to engage with other academic support and co-curricular activities that would make for a well-rounded college experience. As the college prepares to enter its next phase of growth, considerations regarding the scope of the educational model will be critical to both student and institutional success.
Appendix

Appendix A: OLS Regression Models, BMCC ASAP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Semester 1 Credits</th>
<th>Semester 2 Credits</th>
<th>Semester 4 Credits</th>
<th>Semester 1 GPA</th>
<th>Semester 2 GPA</th>
<th>Semester 4 GPA</th>
</tr>
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*Significance p<0.05

Appendix B: Logistic Regression Models, BMCC ASAP

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<td>Remedial</td>
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*Significance p<0.05
Appendix C: OLS Regression Models, Guttman Community College

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<th>Semester 2 Credits</th>
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<th>Semester 2 GPA</th>
<th>Semester 4 GPA</th>
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*Significance p<0.05

Appendix D: Logistic Regression Models, Guttman Community College

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<th>Variable</th>
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*Significance p<0.05
Appendix E: OLS Regression Models, BMCC & Guttman Compared

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<tr>
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*Significant at p<0.05

Appendix F: Logistic Regression Models, BMCC & Guttman Compared, Main Effects

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*Significant at p<0.05
Appendix G: Logistic Regression Models, BMCC & Guttman, Interaction Effects

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<td>Remedial</td>
<td>-1.158*</td>
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*Significant at p<0.05

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Appendix H: Propensity-Score Models, BMCC ASAP & Guttman Community College

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*Significant at p<0.05
Acknowledgments


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