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Over the past five years, CUNY has expanded its workforce offerings across the board in response to demand from employers and students desperate for affordable college-based training. These efforts are crucial to New York's struggle to maintain a competitive edge, but can the system achieve excellence in both the classroom and the workplace?

CUNY on the JOB

The City's New Workforce Workhorse

FIVE YEARS AGO, THE CENTER FOR AN URBAN FUTURE TOOK THE FIRST SERIOUS LOOK

at the City University of New York as a job-training provider, focusing mainly on training conducted under contracts with individual employers. What we found then was that CUNY was helping hundreds of businesses and thousands of employees each year, and that it had a particularly strong record of moving immigrants and low-income workers into working and middle-class jobs. Nonetheless, its full potential remained largely untapped, due to issues ranging from political infighting to a fragmented approach to the task.

Over the past year, working in conjunction with the Workforce Strategy Center, the Center has revisited CUNY to assess its progress as a workforce skills provider, performing a campus-by-campus survey of all 17 undergraduate institutions, reviewing program material and course offerings, and conducting more than 70 interviews with campus administrators and experts in the field. This report offers both a more comprehensive review of CUNY's current workforce efforts, and a look at the future that some of these programs promise.

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Much has changed since we last evaluated CUNY five years ago. Back then both the system overall and many of the individual campuses lacked stable leadership, and a task force appointed by Mayor Giuliani labeled the university an “institution adrift.” When we looked at CUNY’s workforce programs in 1999, we were pleased to find some outstanding efforts, through which the system was achieving such diverse goals as putting welfare recipients into high-paying jobs, and providing employers such as Bear Stearns and the New York Stock Exchange with high-quality training for their employees. These efforts, however, were relatively modest.

Over the past five years, workforce development has become a major part of CUNY’s work with the number of programs and people served dramatically increasing. Last year, enrollment hit 238,379 in all continuing education categories. This was a 30 percent rise since 1998, now accounting for roughly half of all the university’s enroll-

Businesses and government agencies are increasingly turning to colleges to meet their training needs because they offer high-quality courses at competitive prices.

ments. This report drilled down into three major categories and found across-the-board increases in all of them: adult education enrollments reached 140,697, also up 30 percent from just five years ago; another 23,780 workers received skills training through direct contracts with local employers, a 60 percent rise; and CUNY provided welfare-to-work services to nearly 40,000 public assistance recipients over the past four years.

Much of this growth is owed to an improvement in leadership, both at the central administration and at the campus levels. For example, we found that during this time presidents at LaGuardia Community College, Queensborough Community College, and the Borough of Manhattan Community College, and the system Chancellor have each established high-powered business advisory boards both to help build private sector interest in CUNY’s workforce programs and to give input into campus offerings.

At its heart, however, the growth is due to demand. More and more businesses and government agencies throughout the country are turning to higher education to meet their workforce training needs, and New York is no exception. One reason for this shift is that the colleges and universities that have entered the job-training market tend to offer high-quality programs at competitive prices. But people are also making the switch because higher education can help workers attain the one credential other training providers cannot: a college degree. Even President

Bush seems to have recognized that in a knowledge economy, a college education is the best job training of all: In his January 2004 State of the Union Address, he announced “Jobs for the 21st Century,” a major workforce initiative that focuses on expanding access to higher education and job training, and which includes \$250 million to fund partnerships between community colleges and employers in key sectors.

In New York, individual government agencies see CUNY as a significant workforce resource, and corporate clients have begun to follow. But thus far CUNY’s big-picture potential as a booster of the region’s skill base and a powerful economic development resource is largely unrealized. For example, the Bear Stearns training program mentioned above was arranged for by the city’s Economic Development Corporation in 1992 as part of a \$12 million tax-exemption deal to keep the securities giant in New York. The deal charged CUNY’s

New York City College of Technology with training and recruiting entry-level workers for Bear Stearns’ MetroTech office in Brooklyn, and 12 years later, the company continues to rely on City Tech to train quality staff. But despite Bear Stearns’ obvious satisfaction with CUNY’s work, the EDC has yet to return to higher education for workforce services since it struck that deal.

The goals of this report are both to quantify and describe the growth in workforce programming at CUNY, and to examine the interplay between CUNY’s roles as a training provider and an institution of higher education. The first part of the report offers the hard numbers, and an overview of some of the kinds of programs being offered. But this report is no mere academic exercise: Over the past five years, CUNY has become a real force in job training, and its power in this area is likely to continue to grow. The quality of its services will increasingly help determine the quality of New York’s workforce; the choices it makes over the coming years will affect hundreds of thousands of individuals, as well as the economy overall. The second part of the report looks toward that future, highlighting initiatives we believe suggest the university’s true promise in this area: As a provider of high-quality, market-conscious workforce programs that are linked to traditional education, and that are offered on a continuum designed to help individuals reach their full potential, as well as to provide businesses with employees who have the skills they need to succeed. ♦

KEY FINDINGS

The story of the City University's turnaround is well-known in New York. Higher standards and strong leadership have done much to elevate both the university's profile and its stature in the region. But less attention has been paid to the university's role in workforce development—a function that has become a major part of CUNY's activity in recent years.

The Center for an Urban Future has worked in association with the Workforce Strategy Center over the past year to conduct a sweeping survey of employment and training programs at CUNY, updating and expanding upon the Center's 1999 "Putting CUNY to Work" report on workforce initiatives at the university. This review encompasses a campus-by-campus assessment of training programs and includes some of the most comprehensive numbers ever presented on the subject, as well as an analysis of the nature and influence of the system's workforce activity.

Some of our specific findings are highlighted below:

A SURVEY OF WORKFORCE PROGRAMS This study focused on professional studies and workforce programs. All of this activity is housed under the heading of continuing education at CUNY, which accounted for 238,379 enrollments last year, about half of all students attending the university. Three major categories of workforce programming were assessed in this review—adult education courses; employment and welfare-to-work programs; and business contract training—all of which experienced sharp growth in the past five years.

Adult Education Courses are defined in this report as non-credit classes that the general public can take directly from course catalogues, without enrolling in a traditional degree program.

- Enrollments reached 140,697 during the last academic year, an increase of 30 percent over the past five years.
- More than 90 percent of current adult education courses at CUNY are not offered for credit, which does not allow students to apply course time towards a degree. The city's other major player in this area, NYU's School of Continuing and Professional Studies, has seen a 22 percent rise in enrollment in credit-bearing courses between 2000 and 2002.
- CUNY is focusing intently on offering more credit-bearing courses through the creation of its centrally coordinated School of Professional Studies, an ambitious effort dedicated to providing customized, credit-bearing courses and curricula to employers and individuals.

Business Contract Training refers to courses and curricula both designed for and subsidized by employers. With over \$60 billion spent by businesses a year on training, this is a fast-growing market. CUNY saw its numbers in this category rise significantly, climbing from 14,859 employees trained in 1998 to 23,780 in 2003, an increase of 60 percent.

- Public-sector contracts accounted for the majority of CUNY's business contract training in 1998, and they still do. In 2003, the university's contracts with agencies including the Human Resources Administration and the New York City Police Department accounted for 72 percent of the total.
- Private-sector training still comprises a small portion of contract training and actually declined 17 percent over the past five years. But those that tapped the university were satisfied customers, as several major companies such as Bear Stearns, Verizon and JP Morgan Chase have come back to the university year after year for entry- and mid-level training programs for their employees.

Employment and Welfare-to-Work programs are geared toward helping unemployed and under-employed New Yorkers find jobs and advance in their careers. Since the Center last looked at CUNY, the university has gone from being a program provider to being a full partner in the city's efforts in this area.

- CUNY has administered six major welfare-to-work programs, serving 14,397 welfare recipients last year, an overall increase of 127 percent between 1999 and 2003.
- CUNY designed and runs a training academy for the Human Resources Administration that now provides over 50 percent of that agency's training, serving 6,445 HRA staff members through custom-designed courses last year.

LINKING WORKFORCE PROGRAMS WITH ACADEMICS AND CREATING CAREER LADDERS

Overall, workforce programming has mushroomed at CUNY over the past five years; the system now serves nearly a quarter of a million people through programs geared toward working adults and through business and government training contracts. However, the university's training activities are rarely linked to its traditional academic programs, or focused on helping individuals move up a long-term career ladder. A major issue was faculty concern: 16 of the 17 campuses cited poor faculty support as the reason they have not made stronger links between workforce and academic programs.

This report profiles three new initiatives that are successfully beginning to make such connections. They are:

- The New York Information Technology Consortium, a partnership among public, private, educational and nonprofit organizations including three CUNY campuses focused on linking New Yorkers to computer-related careers.
- CUNY on the Concourse, a stand-alone continuing education campus linking the three Bronx campuses around workforce and adult education.
- A strategic plan to align all programs around a new technology system at LaGuardia Community College. ❖

FULL MENU

With expanded offerings in everything from adult education to business training and employment services, career-oriented programs have become core to the mission of the City University.

WHAT FOLLOWS IS AN IN-DEPTH SURVEY OF CUNY's adult-oriented workforce programs. We have not studied, and do not address, programs geared toward youth, or programs that focus on economic development but that do not include a workforce-training component¹.

CUNY classifies all of its workforce programming under the broad rubric of "continuing education"². For this report, we focused on three major categories: adult education courses, which we define as non-credit classes taken directly by working adults who are not enrolled in traditional degree programs; employment and welfare reform, which covers programs funded by and provided through the government; and business contract training, our definition for employer-designed and subsidized training programs for employees. All three categories have seen significant growth in terms of numbers and importance on CUNY campuses.

ADULT EDUCATION COURSES

Courses offered to working adults not enrolled in a traditional degree program fall into a category that is variously known as continuing education, professional studies, and adult education—the last being the term used in this report. Of all the workforce categories,

Career-based programs are growing fast. Even adult education courses that seem to fall into the 'basket-weaving' category often turn out to be geared towards entrepreneurs.

adult education has seen by far the greatest expansion at CUNY, with enrollments climbing more than 30,000 in the past five years.

Despite the growth, adult education is probably the most misunderstood of all workforce categories. For

many New Yorkers, the impression of this area is that it is the soft side of the campus, the one that offers courses like "Swing for Beginners" and "Antiquing for Treasures and Pleasure." While both courses can be found at CUNY, adult education courses have mainly become the province of hard-charging working adults looking to advance their careers. These workers typically use such courses either to brush up on job-related skills or to acquire new ones.

Appropriately, then, the vast majority of courses offered through adult education at CUNY are in areas of business or business applications. These include basics such as bookkeeping and accounting, as well as courses in just about every Information Technology (IT)-related skill one can imagine. For example, at Brooklyn College, courses range from Introduction to PowerPoint to A+ Certification, the primary credential for computer technicians.

Course clusters in IT and other areas, designed to convey a particular skill set, include numerous certificate programs. Certificates are a job-training staple that can be conferred by any provider for any set of courses, but CUNY has in many cases gone the extra mile and gained industry or government approval for its certificate curricula—for example, Lehman College's

Paralegal Studies Program is approved by the American Bar Association. Numerous industry-approved certificates are also offered in the medical/health area, a sector that figures prominently in adult education course offerings at virtually every campus.

¹ Note: the Center has produced an extensive report on CUNY's significant partnership programs with the public schools entitled, "Building a Highway to Higher Education," and is planning a revision of that report in addition to a report dedicated to economic development initiatives at research universities in New York.

² Note: there are times in this report where we refer to CUNY continuing education departments which house all of the categories of workforce programming described in this report.

Baruch College has been perhaps the most aggressive in its focus on gaining industry-approved courses. Known as CUNY's white-collar business campus, the campus has over 12,000 students enrolled in management, finance and accounting degree programs. Its professional and continuing education department has spent the past several years attempting to move virtually all of its classes towards industry certification. It has worked to align course content with major companies such as Sun, Apple and Oracle, and with major agencies such as the New York State Department of Insurance. The school has also instituted strict curriculum standards: 80 percent of course content must be industry approved; the remaining 20 percent is open to the discretion of the instructor.

Even courses that seem to fall into the "basket weaving" category turn out to be geared toward entrepreneurs—for example, a jewelry-making course offered by Kingsborough Community College is more about starting a home-based business than it is about stringing beads. And while some language courses are indeed of the French-for-fun variety, in general the trend is toward building skills for daily commerce: City College offers "Spanish for New Yorkers," "designed to help you conduct functional conversations in Spanish for business or social situations." And there are many courses for those seeking careers as translators or interpreters.

The City University is hardly alone in its vigorous pursuit of adult education students: Increasingly,

ENROLLMENT IN ADULT EDUCATION COURSES AT CUNY			
Colleges	Students '97-'98	Students '02-'03	Percent Change
Borough of Manhattan Com. Col.	2,141	2,571	20%
Bronx Community College	4,849	5,324	9%
Hostos Community College	402	2,055	411%
Kingsborough Community College	16,485	17,936	8%
LaGuardia Community College	12,655	15,947	26%
Queensborough Community College	10,106	9,769	-3%
Baruch College	16,145	15,093	-6%
Brooklyn College	6,039	3,962	-34%
City College	1,244	3,966	218%
Hunter College	5,560	10,429	87%
Lehman College	2,111	2,265	2%
Medgar Evers College	2,812	3,812	35%
NYC College of Technology	2,156	2,902	34%
Queens College	15,025	18,780	24%
College of Staten Island	1,554	3,122	100%
York College	2,594	4,994	92%
CUNY Graduate Center	n/a	12,770	n/a
TOTAL	106,878	140,697	31%

When we conducted our workforce study in 1999, enrollment in adult education courses at CUNY was already substantial, and accounted for about half of all students in the entire CUNY system. But by 2003, the numbers continued to balloon and have grown by over 30 percent to 140,697.

public and private colleges across the nation are focusing on greatly expanding such courses, both to generate additional revenue and to reach more working adults. But as strong as the enrollment and courses are, such classes at CUNY have one major disadvantage compared to other New York colleges, particularly NYU: Well over 90 percent of CUNY's adult tuition enrollment courses are not offered for academic credit. Virtually all the business, accounting and health-care courses a student takes at CUNY—even those that mirror the content of courses offered in degree-bearing programs—might help advance his or her career in the short run, but do not contribute to an accredited degree, the credential most employers are increasingly looking for.

This arrangement is not only disadvantageous to the student; if it is not addressed, over time it could make it difficult for CUNY's continuing education departments to be competitive with other programs in the area. Other institutions are beginning to see continuing education departments as an opportunity to reach people who want to work toward a degree, but who need the flexibility of adult-education style courses. This is an underserved group of individuals who are hungry to learn—and up until now, CUNY has had little to offer them.

However, change may be on the horizon. CUNY recently set up the School of Professional Studies (SPS), which is housed at the CUNY Graduate Center

degree program, so that the courses could count toward an eventual master's degree in education.

CUNY's central office and campuses had received many such requests before—requests that demanded quick turnaround, the development and approval of credit-bearing courses, and flexible course schedules. But in the face of formidable obstacles ranging from faculty and union resistance to an inability to easily direct the client to a willing and able campus, system leaders had declined to pursue these opportunities.

This time, however, the university seized on the UFT's request and established a school that could offer for-credit courses with the flexibility of an adult education program, and that had the potential to allow employers and individuals to tap the expertise of any of the individual campuses with a single phone call.

With the UFT needing the courses to be offered immediately, CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein worked with the Faculty Senate and ensured that the school had a governing board for the school composed largely of CUNY faculty who have approval power over the content of all for-credit courses at SPS. As a result, there are over 250 New York City teachers currently enrolled through SPS in a sequence of courses developed by faculty from City College. City College was chosen because students could parlay courses into a master's degree in literacy at the campus. For SPS' latest project,

The City University is hardly alone in its vigorous pursuit of adult education students: Increasingly, colleges across the nation are greatly expanding such courses, both to generate additional revenue and to reach more working adults.

and designed to offer credit-bearing courses and programs tailored to the needs of employers, nonprofits and working professionals. The initiative began in 2003, when the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) approached CUNY and asked the institution to design a sequence of courses to help teachers gain competency in Schools Chancellor Joel Klein's new literacy curriculum, which went into effect this school year. The UFT was willing to pay for its members to attend the courses, but it had specific needs: It wanted to combine the convenient off-hours schedule of an adult education program with the for-credit rigor of a traditional

Brooklyn College's education department was tapped to work with the American Museum of Natural History.

The initial UFT program really falls into the realm of business contract training (discussed later in this section), but the creation of the School of Professional Studies has many in the field saying the sky is the limit in terms of the university's potential to serve both businesses and working adults.

"CUNY has a market, and they are very competitive on price," notes Carol Aslanian, a national expert on continuing education and business contract training. The goal now for CUNY is to begin to unlock the possibilities.

This study focused on the public CUNY system, but a review of offerings at private colleges and universities in New York City reveals many entrepreneurial approaches to workforce training and adult education. In a brief survey of adult education programs at private campuses in the five boroughs, we found that New York University stood head and shoulders above other city institutions, offering a wealth of non-credit and credit-bearing classes and cutting-edge course content. Due to its combination of aggressiveness, flexibility in course design and business savvy, NYU's School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCPS) has become a national model, offering high-quality degree programs and course clusters on flexible schedules designed for working professionals and businesses.

The school's seemingly effortless expansion owes much to NYU's decentralized academic governance structure. Like the other departments and divisions of NYU, SCPS functions very autonomously. Its 1,500 adjuncts and 150 full-time faculty members operate with a level of independence that has allowed the school to grow rapidly and quickly respond to business needs—while at the same time averting much of the usual infighting over business-oriented curricula. This has also meant, however, that links to the rest of NYU's academic community are rare—not the case thus far with CUNY's fledgling School of Professional Studies, which was formed in part to tap the expertise of the university's various campuses.

Where SCPS connects to the rest of the campus is on a financial level, as a significant portion of annual revenue gen-

NYU has succeeded in creating a model for offering credit-bearing courses to an adult and corporate market without compromising its academic standards or its reputation.

Although it has been around since 1934, SCPS has really taken off over the past few years under Dean David Finney, who has kept the school sharply focused on the local economy. "One of the big drivers has been the needs of the vibrant, huge economy that we're surrounded by," Finney says. The school serves local workers and businesses with the largest single array of professional studies offerings in the city: SCPS offers more than 5,000 courses annually, including a number of credit-bearing subjects, and serves more than 50,000 students—figures that far surpass those of any other New York City private institution or any single CUNY campus, and which have continued to climb despite a faltering economy.

Beyond its course offerings for working adults, SCPS has also set up an aggressive corporate training division, pursuing such clients as MCI, JetBlue Airlines and American Express.

While for-credit offerings still represent a relatively small percentage of SCPS' courses, it is worth noting that that is where the school has seen its growth in recent years: In the fall semester of 2002, SCPS had 3,556 enrollments in credit-bearing degree and diploma programs, and offered 769 credit-bearing courses—numbers that were up 22 percent and 20 percent, respectively, from 2000. During that same period, the number of non-credit course enrollments fell slightly, while the number of non-credit courses offered by SCPS held steady.

erated by SCPS is used to support core academic programs. After SCPS invests in improving its courses, it is able to support the rest of NYU, with its revenue going toward everything from financial aid to the construction of new buildings.

NYU offers some lessons, as well as a few caveats, for CUNY and other public campuses to absorb. But perhaps the most important point to take away is that NYU has succeeded in creating a model for offering credit-bearing courses to an adult and corporate market without compromising its academic standards or its reputation. This particular model may not be one CUNY chooses to replicate, but at the very least its existence proves that linking high-academic standards with credit courses aimed at working adults can be done. More than that, it points to the untapped potential of higher education in New York's training market.

Doug Lynch, who until recently headed up the school's corporate learning division, says, "I always come back to the fact that higher education only has five percent of the training market. That's terrible because higher education knows more about educating people, and we can do it better and cheaper than these so-so training providers out there."

CUNY would make a solid partner: Lynch notes that the City University has a reputation for being "of the city," and that the system can be "far more competitive on price and geographic reach" than NYU. ♦

BUSINESS CONTRACT TRAINING

In this report, business contract training refers to programs both designed and subsidized by employers seeking a specific set of skills for company workers. More and more, employers are asking colleges to provide such curricula, for reasons that are pretty straightforward: Businesses need workers with better skills, and colleges have both higher academic standards and lower prices than many private training providers. Colleges across the country have responded to the demand, increasingly vying with one another for a piece of the more than \$60 billion businesses now spend annually on such training.

City University campuses have engaged in contract training for years, focusing primarily on creating programs for nonprofits and government employers. Our 1999 report found that 12 of the 17 campuses were engaged in contract training, providing a total of 14,859 employees with job-skill courses designed and with costs paid for by employers.

Since then, contract training has continued to grow at CUNY. In 2002-2003, 23,780 employees were served through employer contracts, an increase of 60 percent over the past five years.

The employer contracts varied widely in nature, and required expertise in a range of areas. For example:

- **Borough of Manhattan Community College** trained 23 legal secretaries and support staff in business writing for the law firm of Debevoise & Plimpton, as well as 92 NYC Board of Elections employees in a range of skills that included customer service, computer proficiency and time management.
- **Kingsborough Community College** provided "cultural competency" training to 78 Woodhull Hospital employees, in an effort to help those workers understand and navigate the different needs and norms of their multicultural patient population.
- **The New York City College of Technology's** business-rooted efforts still include one we cited back in 1999—a credit-based program originally designed to train Bell Atlantic employees to become advanced telecommunications technicians. The program trained 160 Verizon employees this past year.

Back in 1999, the majority of CUNY's contract training was conducted on behalf of public-sector institutions.

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CONTRACT TRAINING AT CUNY 2002-2003

Colleges	Total employees enrolled	Government employees	Nonprofit employees	Private employees
Borough of Manhattan Com. Col.	869	579	176	114
Bronx Community College	410	32	50	308
College of Staten Island	75	30	25	0
John Jay College	6,759	6,693	3	63
NYC College of Technology	3,341	800	200	2,341
LaGuardia Community College	1,950	878	390	682
Lehman College	990	431	559	0
Kingsborough Community College	1,034	934	100	0
Hunter College	33	20	13	0
Queensborough Community College	1,557	65	1,267	225
York College	60	35	25	0
CUNY Central	6,445	6,445	0	0
School of Professional Studies	257	257	0	0
TOTAL	23,780	17,239	2,808	3,733

The above figures represent the number of employees whose training at CUNY was paid for entirely or in part by an employer. The numbers represent a 12-month period at each campus, some are the academic year, 2002-2003 and some are the calendar year of 2003. The numbers do not include traditional tuition reimbursement programs.

Closely related to business contract training are sector-based workforce efforts, in which a campus or the central administration focuses on a specific industry and designs a series of educational and training programs to both assist businesses and link students and job-seekers to employment in the field. While sectoral efforts at CUNY and elsewhere typically focus on the economic development of an industry, such as a design incubator at LaGuardia Community College, sectoral initiatives also can provide the same kind of direct response to the training needs of an entire industry that individual employers enjoy through contract training. Such efforts are of particular interest to us not only because they coincide with current trends in economic development, but also because they offer opportunities to provide individuals at a range of skill levels with a continuum of training options within a given field. We found seven such initiatives within CUNY—far more than we found in 1999.

These include:

- An **advanced transportation technologies** initiative serving incumbent workers, through a new set of courses designed by New York City College of Technology in conjunction with the New York City Transit Authority and the Transport Workers Union. This unique triad of education, employer and labor has worked for two years to create credit-bearing career-advancement upgrade courses in cutting edge technologies for workers in the field. This spring 1,000 Transit Authority employees were tested for admission and 400 will enroll in the credit-bearing courses this fall as part of a recently negotiated contract with the union.
- An **aviation** institute created in 2002 with a grant from the Port Authority based at York College in Jamaica, Queens. The

goal of this program, which is still in its infancy, is to make academic programs, focusing on airport-specific skills such as advanced security, available to the region's 150,000 workers in aviation and related industries.

- An **information technology** initiative being run by the New York Information Technology Career Ladders Consortium, which includes Lehman College, LaGuardia Community College and the CUNY Graduate Center, and which is described later.
- A second **information technology** initiative based at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, working in partnership with WNET/Channel 13 to provide technology training in areas such as networking, database design and technical support to workers entering or advancing in the field.
- A **software** incubator, the CUNY Institute of Software Design and Development, run through the central administration that focuses generally on economic development goals, but which is also involved in training projects, such as providing high-end upgrade training for clients of the IT Consortium (described in the following section).

The final two sector initiatives were already running in 1999, and remain active to date: the City Tech **telecommunications** initiative described in the business contract training section, and a **human services** initiative administered by the John F. Kennedy Jr. Institute for Worker Education, housed within the central office. Originally set up by Kennedy, this partnership uses employer and union subsidies coupled with government and foundation grants to offer tuition-free credit-bearing courses to workers who provide direct care to ill or needy New Yorkers, in an effort to improve those workers' skills and wages. ❖

Still the public sector is very much where its focus has remained. Indeed, public sector training has increased 101 percent in the past five years. CUNY's contract-training leader, John Jay College of Criminal Justice trained well over 2,000 New York City Police Department and other government employees in various aspects of law enforcement, including investigation and executive protection.

Public sector training is also the category that houses CUNY's largest single contract; a stand-alone training academy administered by CUNY's central administration for the city's Human Resources Administration. The academy now provides over fifty percent of the agency's internal and contractor training and in 2003 well over 6,000 staff took courses in areas ranging from computer

technology to management and supervisory skills.

Overall, CUNY's employer contracts span a broad range, but based on extensive interviews with business leaders and local chambers of commerce, there is tremendous potential for CUNY to build contract-training numbers within the private sector that are as strong as those it has generated in its public sector work. The low level of private sector training was highlighted by a 17 percent decline in this category of contract training over the past five years. But companies that did access training were impressed with the results: One strong indication of this is that satisfied corporate customers, including prominent companies such as Bear Stearns and Verizon, have come back to CUNY semester after semester for their training needs.

EMPLOYMENT AND WELFARE REFORM

Since we last looked at CUNY, both the Department of Small Business Services (which took over the city's adult workforce development programs last year) and the Human Resources Administration (HRA) have increasingly relied on the City University to help unemployed and under-employed New Yorkers find jobs and advance in their careers. Over the past few years, the CUNY system has grown into something close to a full partner with the departments that administer the city's workforce development programs, taking on a bigger role in providing services more typically offered by traditional nonprofit organizations. For example, CUNY now administers the city's program for job-training vouchers, which dispenses millions of dollars to allow job-seekers of varying skill and income levels to participate in employment programs of their choosing. CUNY also was recently named a partner in the operating consortium for the city's system of one-stop workforce service centers, which serve job-seekers and employers by bringing all employment-related programs under one roof. In addition, two CUNY campuses are slated to become one-stop "affiliates" in the system, operating like satellite one-stop centers.

One of the university's most significant roles in this area has been as a provider of welfare-to-work programs funded by HRA and the New York State Department of Labor. Officials from both CUNY and HRA describe the scope of their collaboration as virtually unprecedented, and both parties assert that it has proven beneficial for the agency, the City University, and the thousands served by these programs. We found

six major programs of this type operating at CUNY, serving nearly 40,000 participants between 1999 and 2003. The programs include:

- COPE (College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment), which provides information, counseling and support services such as child care referral, job-readiness preparation, job placement and follow up to CUNY students receiving public assistance, in an effort to help them meet both HRA requirements and the challenges of college.
- POISED (Perfect Opportunity for Individual Skills and Education Development), which provides counseling and employment services with a specific focus on parenting skills instruction to women who are pregnant or have very young children.
- LEEP (Literacy, Employment and Education Program), a state-funded program that provides instruction in very basic skills to non-native English speakers and students who need the most assistance with reading, writing, language and math skills.
- InVEST (Individual Vocational Education and Skills Training Program) and Job Start⁴, both funded by the state Department of Labor, and which consist of a set of course clusters designed to help individuals attain entry-level jobs or career advancement in major sectors including

The following chart shows the number of people served by each program over a four-year period.

WELFARE-TO-WORK PROGRAMS AT CUNY						
	COPE ⁵	InVEST	Job Start	LEEP	POISED	TANF Assessment
# served in 1999-00	5,436	274	n/a	n/a	646	n/a
# served in 2000-01	5,654	198	50	n/a	1,174	n/a
# served in 2001-02	3,107	177	258	n/a	1,078	7,297
# served in 2002-03 ⁶	6,800	201	458	67	1,613	5,258
Total	28,997	850	766	67	4,511	12,555

⁴ InVEST is open to individuals who are employed for at least 20 hours per week and still receive TANF cash benefits; Job Start enrolls those who meet TANF requirements but do not receive cash benefits and have household incomes within 200% of the federal poverty level.

⁵ InVEST, Job Start and LEEP figures include only students who met a first milestone, i.e. four weeks of satisfactory attendance.

⁶ COPE includes some students returning from the previous fiscal year; some individuals who had graduated or left college, and students who were not receiving TANF but were members of families with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

⁷ POISED includes only participants who enrolled as new students during a given fiscal year. Participants who were carried over from the previous year or who left and returned during the year are not included.

⁸ Preliminary number.

legal services, financial services and health care.

- TANF Assessment, which was designed to help shrink the welfare rolls by offering public assistance recipients working part-time one-on-one informational sessions on the above programs, as well as others that might help those individuals become self-sufficient.

Beyond these CUNY-specific programs, a consortium of three CUNY campuses have also been running one of 11 large-scale HRA contracts for moving public assistance recipients from welfare to work. New York City College of Technology, Borough of Manhattan Community College and LaGuardia Community College collectively placed 2,667 participants into jobs between 2000 and 2004.

CUNY's emergence as a major provider of government workforce services has not been all smooth sailing. InVEST faces an uncertain future in the context of state budget woes; this year, the governor's budget proposal zeroed out funding for the program, though the

ment goals of the program and participants' educational goals by emphasizing internships as well as employment-oriented services like job interview and resume coaching. Since the push toward a harder line on welfare recipients began with federal welfare reform in 1996, HRA has allowed students receiving welfare to count only explicitly vocational or two-year associate degree programs toward their mandatory 35 hours per week of "work activities." For students on aid who elect to pursue studies—such as a traditional liberal arts curriculum—that can't be counted toward their work requirements, COPE staff suggest steps to help them balance school and welfare obligations, such as leaving blocks of time free in their schedules to meet their work requirements. COPE is active on the ten CUNY campuses that offer associate degree programs.

Indeed, while CUNY has striven to serve public assistance recipients with an ever-greater array of programs, the institution once known as "the poor man's Harvard" has seen its own population of students on public assistance plummet since the passage

The CUNY system has grown into something close to a full partner with the departments that administer the city's workforce development programs, taking on a bigger role in providing services more typically offered by traditional nonprofit organizations.

cut was later restored. And the TANF Assessment program, the second-largest of the programs listed above, was discontinued by the Bloomberg administration last year in a cost-cutting move.

But the biggest tension exists between CUNY's role as an educational institution and the near-total focus on job placement dictated by federal and city workforce policies.

The evolution of the COPE program presents the clearest case of how CUNY's workforce and educational missions sometimes collide. CUNY's oldest and largest program of this type, COPE began in 1993 by providing comprehensive academic, counseling and supportive services to welfare recipients enrolled at CUNY. Following the passage of federal welfare reform, COPE was reinvented in 1998 as a "work first" program, with 80 percent of its funding based on placement numbers.

COPE attempts to support both the job-place-

of welfare reform. The number of CUNY degree students on welfare has dropped from nearly 27,000 in 1995 to a low of 4,720 in 2000. In the most recent figures available, 5,461 students on public assistance were enrolled in 2003. To be sure, many of these individuals remained in school but left the welfare rolls as the city's overall welfare population fell by about 50 percent over the same period.

Taken as a whole, most would agree that having CUNY provide workforce services to welfare recipients is a good thing. As both an institution of higher education and an employment services provider, CUNY is uniquely situated to help low-income people improve their skills and credentials. However, its function as a government service provider threatens to undermine its primary mandate as an educator if it does not always work to meaningfully integrate these two roles. ❖

The move to connect workforce-oriented programs to traditional academics has raised serious concerns at U.S. college campuses, and CUNY is no exception. The biggest fear, expressed most adamantly by tenured faculty and unions, is that colleges are fast being transformed into "Corporate U.," catering to the business community at the expense of traditional rigorous academic standards. The deepest worry is that making such links, particularly by offering more credit-bearing and degree-oriented courses through continuing education programs, will allow the university to rely increasingly on part-time adjunct faculty, shrinking the number of positions available for full-time professors.

This is no light debate. It has endlessly stalled many workforce efforts and kept them isolated from academic departments.

CUNY will have to walk a fine line to accommodate the concerns of faculty while still moving ahead with its plans to bring together academics and career-oriented instruction.

In fact, in our survey it was the one issue that invariably came up at every interview as a primary obstacle to advancing workforce programming and linking those programs to degree tracks. Whenever we would ask about faculty connections to contract training or adult education programs, deans, presidents and other administrators would roll their eyes and recite similar stories of frustration.

This battle is intense and long-standing. In our survey, 16 of 17 campuses identified this as a major barrier to offering credit-bearing courses through adult education programs. Indeed, many in continuing education feel their hands are tied because, as Shawn O'Riley, continuing education administrator at Hunter College put it, "The academic side [demands] strict control over the courses, and that is not going to change any time soon." Another continuing education dean told us that he would like to offer credit-bearing courses but it is just not worth the fight with faculty.

Nonetheless, the creation of the School of Professional Studies managed to provoke plenty of ire.

"The School of Professional Studies was formed by CUNY to make money and that's fine, but I'm concerned about academic quality," says Susan O'Malley, chair of the Faculty Senate. O'Malley sits on SPS' faculty-dominated governing board, which was created to address such concerns, and which makes all decisions about what courses will be eligible for credit. "We decided that with faculty involved in this board, we could [sign off]," she says.

Faculty concerns about the need for academic departments to have a say in the design of for-credit course offerings are legitimate and must be addressed. However, much of the fear in this area seems to be unfounded: Not only is there no evidence that

CUNY intends to compromise academic standards, but Chancellor Goldstein has actually raised them during this period of workforce program growth. Indeed, our survey found that continuing education departments actually want input from traditional academics—but that professors are often hesitant to make the time if the benefits do not accrue to their departments.

Perhaps a more serious concern is the reliance on part-time faculty. CUNY faculty accurately point out that professional studies programs have become significant revenue generators at most colleges at the same time the number of tenured faculty has plummeted: In 2002, nearly 60 percent of professors were adjuncts at CUNY, and the number of full time faculty fell to 5,656—just over half the high of 11,268 in 1975.

The City University administration counters that it has begun replenishing the faculty members that have been lost. In a time of major budget reductions, CUNY is re-hiring for 700 new faculty positions over the next two years. And on this point, Chancellor Goldstein has won over many faculty critics with his pledge to dedicate revenue from the School of Professional Studies right back to support doctoral education, one of the top priorities for faculty and students alike.

We also found that a few campuses like Lehman College, LaGuardia Community College and New York City College of Technology are driven to move students from continuing education into academic departments, effectively using adult education to create foot traffic for traditional departments that might not typically attract such students.

Despite such efforts it is clear that CUNY will have to walk a fine line to accommodate the concerns of faculty and campus unions while still moving ahead with its plans to bring together academics and career-oriented instruction, but doing so is not impossible. Says Yelena Melikian, director of the Business and Industry Training Center at New York City College of Technology, who has developed two credit-bearing sector-based workforce programs: "It's all about process and building internal partnerships. I did in the beginning have trouble having faculty come on board and accept continuing education as a legitimate partner, but now after eight years of collaboration, everyone at my college knows what we stand for and what we're trying to do," she says.

For CUNY, getting there will require honest dialogue among all parties, skilled and dedicated leadership, and a willingness to commit to maintaining the quality and integrity of the university above all else. ❖

CUNY AT THE CROSSROADS

At the City University, all the pieces are in place for top-flight workforce and academic development. Can CUNY put them together?

AS THE SURVEY IN THE FIRST PART OF THE report suggests, CUNY is in a distinctly different place than it was in 1999 when we issued our last report. As Kathryn Wylde, president of the city's leading business organization, the Partnership for New York City, puts it: "There is no institution that has turned itself around to the degree that CUNY has. It is the model I point to of how a public system can be resurrected."

The university now boasts stable leadership under Chancellor Matthew Goldstein and a team of energetic campus presidents. The system has raised academic standards and ended remediation at all four-year colleges. And on the workforce front, CUNY has become something of a job-training powerhouse, offering a vast and diverse array of new employment and economic-development programs geared toward everyone from low-income job seekers and non-traditional students to major private and public employers.

Yet, in spite of all its progress as a training provider and its fundamental role as an educator, CUNY's three basic workforce program categories—welfare reform and employment programs, adult education and business contract training—remain almost completely segregated from the university's traditional degree-granting programs. It is almost as if the two spheres have nothing to do with one another; those who come in through the "job training" entrance might as well be in a different institution. In addition, workforce programs at CUNY also tend to operate in isolation from one another.

A user-friendly, high-quality continuum of workforce programs not just located within CUNY's confines, but truly connected to the degree side of the university—indeed, with that goal at the core—would maximize the advantages of locating these programs at CUNY.

It would also be a major resource for employers, and for the region overall. To that end, many states across the country have made higher education core to their workforce and economic development planning. In 1995 the state legislature in North Carolina designated the community college system as the official arm of the state's Department of Commerce and as the prime provider of industry-specific training; Los Angeles recently allocated \$12.5 million in surplus wel-

fare funds to create a set of career-path programs through the city college system; Minnesota has spent \$35 million to fund college and business training partnership programs since 2000; and in 1998, Washington state Governor Gary Locke set aside \$75 million in state welfare funds for the community college system to work in partnership with the state's economic development and employment agencies to craft a statewide career-path initiative.

And this March, Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm announced a commission to explore all the connections between workforce and higher education and set a goal of doubling the number of college graduates under her watch. The governor made clear the importance of education by saying, "Our higher education system is the jet fuel that propels our economy. If we want a high-performance economy, we must work now to improve the strength, depth, and adaptability of our colleges and universities—this could not be more critical to our state."

None of these areas have perfect higher education or workforce systems (and, in fact, could learn a lot from the model CUNY programs), but they do all possess mayors and governors fully aware of the power of higher education. These regions have recognized that in an information economy, higher education is not something separate from skills training, but rather the pinnacle of it. Unfortunately, CUNY has received no such mandate from city or state public officials.

The lack of external leadership on workforce development from city and state officials has led to the lack of connection between government contracts and education, but there are internal issues that prevent CUNY from making such links to contract training and adult education courses as well. Within CUNY itself any discussion of connecting workforce and academic programs provokes significant opposition, largely bred of the concern that connecting to anything "vocational" will diminish the academic side of higher education—that it will somehow lead to a devaluation of a CUNY degree. But the move toward connecting job training and education is actually meant to do the opposite: Businesses and government agencies want CUNY involved in workforce

development not because they want to “dumb down” CUNY’s academic departments, but because they desperately want to make job training smarter.

Workforce programming at CUNY has hit critical mass; it is now a significant portion of the university’s work, and as such, should be connected to the system’s educational mission in a meaningful way, and standards should be organized for its workforce offerings to help individuals fulfill their true academic and professional potential.

Stanley Aronowitz, a sociology professor at the CUNY Graduate Center, recently completed a review of workforce programs for the CUNY union and found a similar need to set goals and standards, stating that “CUNY is a serious academic institution and if you’re involved in workforce development you have to make sure there are credentials, jobs and academics connected to the programs. We have an obligation as a university to leverage [our] academic prestige.”

To that end, we recommend two simple parameters for all current and future workforce development programs:

1) Workforce offerings at CUNY should have links to the traditional academic ladder.

2) In addition to providing job placement or immediate work-based skills, CUNY’s workforce efforts should be selected and organized to help students understand and maximize their career potential.

A few individuals and programs at CUNY have surmounted the barriers of logistics and internal politics and found innovative ways both to integrate various work-based programs with one another and with the academic side of campus, and to try to offer individuals a continuum of resources rather than isolated programs. The results, highlighted in the following section, begin to suggest the tremendous potential that CUNY now possesses, and which we hope it will choose to fulfill. ❖

BUILDING BRIDGES

The profiles that follow highlight some existing attempts to integrate and connect the academic and workforce hemispheres at CUNY. They represent three different models for building the kind of relationship between the two areas that we would like to see CUNY move toward. All three models also focus on trying to help individuals meet their full academic and career potential by organizing programs in a user-friendly way, and offering support services such as counseling to help facilitate the process.

IT CONSORTIUM: THE CAREER PATHWAYS MODEL

Among the promising workforce efforts at CUNY is one being run by the New York Information Technology Career Ladders Consortium, a group of public and private sector partners that includes three CUNY campuses: Lehman College, LaGuardia Community College and the CUNY Graduate Center. An effort to link disconnected programs and resources to better serve IT employers, as well as to help individuals start or move up in IT careers, the consortium is working directly with the technology sector to build what it calls a technology career pathway, using a model that has had success in other cities at helping meet employer demand for skilled workers and at ensuring that training opportunities lead to good jobs.

Career pathways are clearly defined avenues for entry and advancement within a key sector of a local or regional economy. The infrastructure for these pathways

is built by bringing together disparate pots of workforce training dollars, earmarked for various purposes, and using them to create a user-friendly continuum of skills training, education and related services. For example, the IT Consortium is working with \$1 million in federal training funds from the Workforce Investment Board, \$3 million from the U.S. Department of Labor—part of the H1-B program designed to alleviate the need for American companies to hire foreign workers—and \$500,000 from several private foundations.

Here’s how the IT Consortium’s pathway works: At the entry level, three community-based organizations (CBOs)—the Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation, St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation, and Citizens Advice Bureau—inform and recruit individuals who are unemployed or underemployed and are interested in the IT field. The CBOs then put prospective students through an assessment process developed with the employer partners—the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, the New York

Software Industry Association and Earn Fair LLC, a staffing agency for nonprofits. The CBOs evaluate a candidate's qualifications in areas ranging from reading and math skills to prior work history. Those who pass the assessment are referred to one of the three CUNY campuses—LaGuardia, the CUNY Graduate Center or Lehman (which serves students at the Bronx CUNY on the Concourse location), and enrolled in classes. The CBOs continue to work with the students throughout the program, providing case management, ongoing counseling, and social services to those who must overcome additional barriers to employment. The students also work with job developers who look for internships and employment for them. The intermediary functions are being performed by the Workforce Strategy Center (our partner on this report), which has worked on developing pathways in a number of states, and by Seedco, a national financial, technical and program assistance intermediary for nonprofits and small businesses.

The IT Consortium, and the pathways model in general, employs external leadership to bring together a whole host of partners with different skills, and allows each of them to do what they do best. From CUNY's perspective, this means that the university can stick to its bread and butter—that is, educating students—and let other partners provide the supports, industry expertise, and logistical know-how. The model also offers trainees a level of support colleges can't provide on their own, and a connection to the market that most workforce programs don't have.

In addition to imparting the skills employers want, the consortium also seeks to help provide individuals with the credentials they need—that is, certificates and/or degrees. In that regard, the consortium has had to face many of the same obstacles to linking workforce and traditional academic programs that have cropped up time and again throughout the system. For example, all basic and entry-level courses are offered through adult education programs, and right now none are offered for credit. However, the consortium is working hard to build both the mechanism and the good will necessary to change that.

In seeking accreditation for its courses, the consortium plans to work with CUNY academic departments and faculty to create classes that are both relevant to employers and rigorous enough to count toward a degree. The approach has succeeded elsewhere. For example, in San Mateo, California, a biotechnology initiative aimed at dislocated workers offered a highly-concentrated, credit-bearing version of a four-semester program over a 12-week period. Skyline College in Silicon Valley tailored the program for this population by compressing existing college courses in subjects

such as biology and mathematics, and using examples from the workplace in the classroom to show the theory's practical application.

Beyond the entry-level offerings, the consortium is also running middle- and high-level upgrade courses for IT professionals seeking to advance in their careers. The CUNY Institute for Software Design and Development (CISDD), a centrally-run program, offers this more advanced instruction.

Last year 80 people trained in entry-level courses through the consortium; in 2004 there will be 200 at the entry level, 50 intermediate trainees, and an estimated 125 workers signing up for high-level "upgrade" courses. The consortium expects to train over 700 New Yorkers for tech careers in the coming two years.

The IT Consortium is the kind of project we'd like to see CUNY do more of. Although it does not guarantee jobs for participants who complete the entry-level program (as some career pathways do), the consortium has strong and direct links to the local economy through the New York Software Industry Association, and is highly attuned to industry need. Within this initiative, each partner does what it does best—in CUNY's case, academic preparation. The consortium also leverages public funding very effectively, creating something larger than what each partner could offer alone. It provides individuals with a range of opportunities to enter and advance in a sector that needs workers. And, perhaps most important of all, it contains, as we believe all of CUNY's workforce offerings should, the pursuit of ever-higher education at its core.

CUNY ON THE CONCOURSE: A TEACHING AND TRAINING CONTINUUM

CUNY on the Concourse (COTC) is a unique effort to fuse job training and education in a user-friendly way. In a few short years this stand-alone school on a major commercial strip in the Bronx has brought adult learners of every stripe under its canopy, become a go-to spot for government agencies who want its workforce services, and managed to bridge the gap between workforce and degree programs at CUNY in a number of ways.

Located on the Grand Concourse in the Bronx, CUNY on the Concourse was launched in 2002 as a project of the three Bronx campuses: Lehman College, Hostos Community College and Bronx Community College, working with Local 1199/SEIU, New York's Health and Human Services Employees Union. Its initial mission was to help train workers for nursing and other health-care jobs, while at the same time

addressing the tremendous need for basic skills in the Bronx—home to more unemployed people, public-assistance recipients and non-native English speakers than any other borough. Since then, the campus has responded to demand for courses and programs in a range of areas, and its offerings now span such diverse fields as design and space planning, entrepreneurship, technology and mediation.

Like the IT Consortium, COTC pulls together resources from a number of places and programs to offer a spectrum of training and educational opportunities, as well as counseling and support services to working adults, a significant portion of whom come to COTC through government programs.

COTC's focus on educational counseling, preparation and credentialing is aggressive. When individuals arrive, they are evaluated and counseled about their options. These include everything from one-time courses in Adobe Photoshop to certificate programs in the areas of business, technology, health care and accounting, several of which lead to state or industry certifications in the field. COTC also offers a wide range of non-credit-bearing remedial courses, including English as a Second Language (ESL) and vocational courses, as well as preparation for exams ranging from the GED to the GMAT.

In short order, the COTC program has become the go-to location for government agencies who want high-quality workforce programs.

Some programs also lead to college degrees. Among them is COTC's pre-health program, which is designed to lead to a "seamless transition" to one of the three Bronx colleges, where students then pursue degrees in health-related careers such as nursing, health care administration or physical therapy. Bridge to College, another program offered at CUNY on the Concourse (as well as at York College), teaches critical thinking, writing and math to adults who have graduated high school and want to pursue a college degree but who are not yet prepared to take CUNY's entrance exam and succeed in a college environment. To help facilitate the transition, CUNY allows students to take up to 12 credits at COTC itself—in "core courses" such as composition, public speaking and literature. These are accredited and taught by professors from one of the three Bronx CUNY colleges, and can be counted toward any major, at any CUNY college. This is worth underscoring—COTC is one of the only places in the CUNY system that focuses squarely on offering credit-bearing courses to adult education students.

"The real philosophy with this program is [that it's]

a continuum," says Lehman College Dean of Adult Education Michael Paull, who co-founded COTC. "A continuum between workforce programs, associate degrees, and bachelor degrees. Now, the connection may not be direct or one right after another, but we do everything we can to encourage the continuum. We do this through advising and linking students to [the right] programs. Depending on who someone is and where they are in their career, we will direct them."

The school's focus on educational attainment does not prevent it from taking its workforce preparation efforts just as seriously. COTC staff members take pains to ensure that course offerings have practical applications. Direct industry partnerships help inform syllabi, and working professionals teach many of the classes. Staff poll students about their needs and interests, and compare their responses to the results of surveys of Bronx employers to better determine how to match employers' hiring needs with student career preferences.

So far, the program's priorities seem to be paying off. COTC has already become a significant resource for a number of government agencies, and has been chosen to participate in high-profile initiatives ranging from the government's InVEST program for welfare recipients to the sector-based work of the IT Consortium. It has also been a hit with students: The very first semes-

ter CUNY on the Concourse opened, in 2002, 750 students enrolled. The following year there were over 1,100 students, and it is expected to keep growing. But perhaps most importantly, COTC's efforts to put the education back in adult education are succeeding: Last semester, out of 60 eligible students over two semesters, COTC placed 25 in degree programs at CUNY colleges.

How's that for linking job training to education?

TAKING THE LEAD AT LAGUARDIA: TEARING DOWN THE WALLS

If one higher education administrator is battering through intransigence and bureaucracy, it is LaGuardia Community College President Gail Mellow, whose self-imposed mission is to do what has never been done before at CUNY: Unite and integrate all campus programs, including city employment contracts, continuing education, business contract training and traditional degree programs. The goal is revolutionary, but simple: clarify career goals for all students and at the same time build a bridge for students enrolled in workforce

programs into the degree side of the campus.

Her vision includes unifying all aspects of student life, including what are now separate admission offices, payment processes, and financial plans, into a user-friendly system—an approach that is far from typical.

The goal is revolutionary, but simple: clarify career goals for all students and at the same time build a bridge for students enrolled in workforce programs into the degree side of the campus.

“You know how college works,” says Mellow. “You show up and register for class and then it’s ‘good luck.’”

She is slowly building the foundation for this Herculean task through two major initiatives that have already begun to succeed in assisting students with career goals and in fostering communication and cooperation between traditional and continuing education programs.

The first initiative originates from a federally-funded program called electronic portfolios. Starting with a demonstration group of 800 students, LaGuardia built a technology system that enabled college counselors to capture all of the work each student does every semester—any paper or project—and to track his or her academic progress, both through classroom grades and through a series of assessments that measure critical reading, writing, and thinking. The technology is easy to use, and has proven popular. For example, international students at LaGuardia, of which there are many—LaGuardia has the most diverse student population of any college campus in the world—have frequently allowed family members in other countries to peek at their portfolio and track their progress with them.

But the system will be able to do more than just capture information: Simply by being required to input all the data, students and counselors alike will be regularly forced to revisit a student’s educational and career goals. Students must now periodically ask themselves, “What is my career goal, and how should I be using my educational opportunities to meet that goal?”—a type of reflection that is rarely fostered on college campuses.

A select few other colleges across the country have also set up Eportfolios, but LaGuardia is one of the few that intends to use them as leverage to link all their students and programs. By September 2004, every entering freshman at LaGuardia will be expected to create an Eportfolio. And beyond the degree students, Mellow is planning to extend the same system to all students, from those enrolled in welfare-to-work programs to employees in corporate training at the campus.

The technology will enable a campus like

LaGuardia to make some of the campus-wide connections that are too numerous for any student and even many administrators to keep up with. The technology will be set up not only to track academic and career interests, but also to alert students when a new course

or certificate program is being offered in their areas of interest. The technology will be able to respond to demand, noticing, for example, if a large number of students are interested in a particular field, and then signaling to the college administration to add a course or offer a new type of degree. It’s no surprise it’s referred to in IT circles as “push technology” because it pushes information out to the user, as opposed to waiting until the user asks for the information.

“The old adage was, to rise in the business world you would start in the mailroom of a MetLife and work your way up,” Mellow says. “Well, there are no more mailrooms like that anymore. But we do have the technology to move people and make the connections for them.”

The second initiative is a complete revamping of academic program development at the campus. The core reform is to bring the continuing education side of the campus to the table when new academic programs are developed. Now when a new program, such as the new degree for Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN), is established, a “bridge” can be built in to link adult education students and programs to the degree. This has helped continuing education administrators become far more informed about credit-bearing health courses and degrees, and far more able to help students define the appropriate path to their goals.

From a student’s perspective, this means that an individual who aspires to become an LPN but does not have the skills to go straight into an academic program might start by becoming a nurse’s assistant, while at the same time being set on a clear, structured path toward her or his longer-term goal. In this case, that path would include developing basic skills before being guided into the full degree program. Mellow says she will continue to build bridges into all future degree programs and will soon start working to construct bridges into all degree programs already on the books.

“LaGuardia is typical of colleges across the country—the non-credit [courses] are seen as the shadow college,” she says. “We need to bring that population into the sunshine and think of every person who walks through the door as a student.”❖

Michael Paull is the Dean of Adult Education at Lehman College and a pioneer of linking adult courses to traditional credit and degree programs and was the prime mover behind the new CUNY on the Concourse. Center for an Urban Future director Neil Kleiman spoke with Dean Paull about many of the issues surrounding workforce and adult education at CUNY. What follows are highlights from these conversations.

CUF: You often talk about using adult education as a 'bridge.' Can you tell me what you mean by this?

We are intentionally blurring the lines between credit, non-credit, certificate and degree programs. The point is to create a 'bridge' to career advancement and/or a degree. We provide the assessment and tools to get to the next level successfully. We don't say that the next level is about Lehman or another campus; it could be a career or a community college. But we set people up to have the ability to take the next step, and often that means having the grounding to advance their post-secondary career.

Bridging encompasses a range of programs from remediation to ESL to advanced programs for people who already have a B.A.

This is a concept that [we have taken] to the CUNY on the Concourse.

CUF: What is unique about the CUNY on the Concourse program?

The location in a retail hub of the Bronx allows us to do what we have wanted to do for a long time including: one, partner with the other CUNY campuses in the Bronx; two, capture the population we are aiming for and really give them a lot of services to advance; and three, rather than saying 'come to us' the way most colleges operate, we will come to the students [with programs off-site in a major commercial district].

CUF: Was there a benefit to locating the program away from a college campus?

There are, to be sure, some advantages to being connected to a college campus like reputation and facilities, but there are some real disadvantages. You suffer by being based at a campus such as issues around space and scheduling. Here at the COTC there is so much flexibility, and that allows us to do so much more than if we were on a campus.

One example of this is how quickly we set up credit programs. This is difficult to do on a campus, but it can be done. There is really all this misinformation and misunderstanding around credit offerings at CUNY. But the fact is that CUNY, like any campus in the country, can have its continuing education department [administer] credit-bearing courses, it's just that most think you can't.

The issue that people miss is that continuing education [departments] do not offer the credit courses directly; it merely makes it available to a population that ordinarily wouldn't take the course. Continuing education [departments] are a vehicle to offer courses to more people. It is still the academic department's courses and taught by them. This is how it works everywhere in the country. I was at Brooklyn College recently telling them this and that they can indeed offer credit offerings and they said, 'We never knew.'

CUF: Was it difficult to form partnerships with all three campuses for CUNY on the Concourse?

They are [very connected] to it now, but they initially [felt] threatened. Now they are beginning to see it for what it is: a feeder to their programs. We are enlarging the pool.

CUF: What are your views on adult and continuing education throughout CUNY?

Continuing education has to be completely re-conceptualized. It is thought of as a community college function and primarily about vocational education. [The field] is far beyond this notion. This is an understanding stuck in a time 20 years ago.

Continuing education should offer a whole continuum of courses and assistance that help students move up. The fact is that continuing education in the CUNY system has greatly advanced and is no longer about a pure vocational mission.

[Campus] presidents for the most part don't understand the potential of continuing education. They view it as an income producer, not an FTE (Full Time Equivalent student) producer. When it is seen [purely] as an income producer it is hard to be creative.

Continuing education needs to be seen as a vital part of what we do. But if continuing education is viewed just, and I underline 'just,' as vocational training, then it is and will continue to be perceived at odds with the university.❖

RECOMMENDATIONS

Workforce programs at CUNY have hit a critical mass, with all continuing education enrollment now totaling just under a quarter of a million; welfare and employment programming intimately tied to city efforts; and contract training showing dramatic sustained growth. With some planning and a commitment to holding its efforts in this area up to its own high standards, CUNY has the potential to be an unrivalled public resource for employers and workers at all levels. In addition, in its new workforce powerhouse, and in higher education in general, New York now has an opportunity to create a coherent workforce development system designed to push its workers as far as they can go up the skills ladder. It is time for both CUNY and state and city leaders to pull their chairs up to the table and start planning for the future.

1. CUNY should develop a mission statement and guidelines for its workforce activities.

Right now, few of CUNY's workforce programs connect directly to the traditional educational ladder or help participants identify a long-term career path. This shortchanges the students, puts CUNY at a competitive disadvantage, and threatens to bring CUNY's workforce efforts into conflict with its fundamental mission as an institution of higher learning.

We recommend that CUNY develop a workforce mission statement that frames its efforts in this area as an extension of its fundamental role as an educator, and as an opportunity to reach new groups of students, for whom higher education is the ultimate career credential.

To this end we recommend that CUNY leadership institute the following guidelines:

- 1) Workforce programs at CUNY should communicate with and connect to the academic side of the campus.
- 2) Each program must have clear and direct links to the next-step programs and resources necessary to help move users effectively toward their career and educational goals.

Setting these guidelines would not mean that CUNY should turn down all government contracts that do not include funding for general educational components; instead, it should begin to think seriously about how to leverage government workforce funds with other monies in order to establish and offer the kinds of programs it believes in.

2. CUNY must use its newfound clout to help set the city's workforce training agenda.

As a major player in job training, CUNY now has an opportunity

to help put education at the heart of workforce development in New York. The institution should draw on its experience as a provider to point out where programs suffer for lack of links to traditional education, and to push policymakers to integrate higher education more fully into the system.

3. City and state leaders must begin to help guide higher education's role in workforce development at the policy level.

CUNY's role in workforce development is already significant enough to call for immediate attention from city and state leaders; even better would be for them to go one step further, and to outline a workforce strategy that centers on higher education in general.

Higher education institutions are fiercely independent by nature—it is only recently that CUNY campuses have even begun to forge significant links with one another. Thinking of CUNY and its private counterparts at NYU and Columbia working jointly on large-scale programs has long been positively anathema. That has to end. Major regions in the Bay Area, North Carolina, and Massachusetts are defined by collective higher education strength and, increasingly, partnerships among leading institutions. We recommend that the mayor convene top higher education officials at the major New York institutions and form a higher education workforce alliance to jointly craft programs that will better serve working New Yorkers and local businesses.

4. The Bloomberg administration should begin to incorporate higher education into both its workforce and economic development strategies.

Individual institutions already have plenty to offer in both areas. For example, CUNY's custom-designed contract training programs would be a sweet incentive to offer employers as part of the Bloomberg administration's corporate retention strategy. And the good news is that CUNY, traditionally so decentralized that outsiders had trouble just figuring out who to talk with, is now much more user-friendly. Easy points of access now include the centrally-coordinated School of Professional Studies and CUNY on the Concourse in the Bronx, two programs created to custom design and quickly link employers and workers to the right set of courses and training.

One fast way to link higher education to business incentive programs is to follow the lead of many leading cities and dedicate a portion of federal workforce dollars to customized business training provided by local public and private colleges. These funds can serve two important goals, addressing both the chronic need of employers for better-trained workers and the ambitions of struggling workers to move up career ladders. ❖

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The Workforce Strategy Center is a national nonprofit that shapes policy and institutional change to create a market-driven workforce system. www.workforcestrategy.org

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Primary support for this report was provided by the Ford Foundation. Program support was provided by Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation, JP Morgan Chase Foundation, New York Community Trust, the Taconic Foundation, the Bernard F. and Alva B. Gimbel Foundation, and the Stella and Charles Guttman Foundation.

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