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Transforming Community College Education at The City University of New York

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Abstract

The City University of New York (CUNY) developed and implemented two evidence-based, educational initiatives at its community colleges. Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP), on six campuses, helped 55 percent of students who enter with one or two developmental needs earn an associate degree within three years. This compares with 20 percent for non-ASAP students who needed remediation. An external random assignment study by MDRC found that ASAP increased credits earned, completion of developmental coursework, and first-to-second semester retention. An independent study out of Columbia University Teachers College estimated that despite higher initial expenses, ASAP's higher graduation rate costs the university $6,500 less per three-year graduate. The second innovation, CUNY's New Community College (NCC), opened with 300 students in Fall 2012. It offers A.A. and A.S. degrees for transfer to baccalaureate programs, plus occupational A.A.S. degrees. Using a curriculum organized around problem-solving for New York City's future, it integrates developmental and credit coursework, field experiences, and classroom learning in a structured and supportive environment. Other components include full-time study in the first year, limited majors, and a multidisciplinary faculty-staff instructional team. Early results include a 92 percent first-to-second-semester retention rate for Spring 2013.

La transformación del *Community College of Education* en la *City University of New York*

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Resumen

La *City University of New York (CUNY)* ha desarrollado dos iniciativas educativas basadas en evidencias en sus "community colleges". *La Accelerated Study in Associate Programs* (ASAP), en seis campus, ha ayudado al 55 por ciento de los estudiantes que tenían una o dos necesidades educativas, a obtener el certificado en tres años frente al veinte por ciento de estudiantes que no siguieron este programa y necesitaron un curso de recuperación. Un estudio aleatorio externo realizado por MDRC mostró que ASAP incrementaba el número de créditos superados, la finalización de las tareas del curso y la retención entre el primer y segundo semestre. Un estudio independiente de *Columbia University Teachers College* estimó que a pesar de que los costes iniciales eran mayores, el mayor índice de graduación de los estudiantes ASAP costaba a la universidad 6.500 dólares menos por estudiante durante los tres años. La segunda innovación presentada es la *CUNY's New Community College* (NCC), iniciada con 300 estudiantes en otoño de 2012. Ofrece grados A.A y A.S. para pasar a programas de grado, y grados A.A.S. de tipo profesional. A través de un currículum organizado en torno a la resolución de problemas que afectan al futuro de Nueva York, integra trabajo competencial y de créditos, experiencias de campo y aprendizaje en clase en un contexto estructurado y de apoyo al estudiante. Otros componentes del programa son un primer año de estudio a tiempo completo, un número reducido de alumnos y un equipo multidisciplinar de profesores. Los resultados iniciales indican un 92 por ciento de retención de estudiantes del primer al segundo trimestre en la primavera de 2013.

U S. residents have turned to public community colleges as affordable entry points to baccalaureate degrees, as well as pathways toward the knowledge and skills needed for the 21st century workplace, particularly since the Great Recession started and tuition rose at public and, more dramatically, private colleges. Community colleges account for almost half of the undergraduate students in the United States, serving approximately 3 million full-time and 4 million part-time students in degree and nondegree programs, according to the American Association of Community Colleges.

Recognizing the potential of community college education, President Obama called for 5 million more graduates by 2020 and for every U.S. citizen to have at least one year of postsecondary education. He secured $2 billion to invest in job training through partnerships between community colleges and local employers (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012).

Community colleges, however, cannot count on government support. Washington pays a fraction of operating costs, although federal programs offer students substantial tuition assistance. State and local government support has long trended downward. Tuition therefore has risen, reaching a record high 47 percent of revenue at two- and four-year public colleges in 2012; that's up from 23.3 percent in 1987 (State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, 2013).

Meanwhile, community college students often arrive ill-prepared for academic work. Nationally, only 20 percent who take either remedial reading or two nonreading remedial courses earn a baccalaureate degree (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d., cited in CUNY, 2008, p. 17). Just 15 percent of first-time community college students who started in 2003-2004 earned an associate degree within six years; 10.6 percent earned a bachelor's degree; 18.5 percent were still enrolled, while the rest dropped out (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011).

At The City University of New York (CUNY), the largest urban public university in the United States, the six-year graduation rate for Fall 2005 first-time freshmen in associate programs was 41.2 percent for those

needing three (CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, n.d.). Eighty percent of incoming community college freshmen need at least one developmental course (CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2012a). Only 10 to 12 percent earn an associate degree within three years and three-quarters do not graduate within six years (CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2012b).

Full-time students have a higher chance of earning diplomas. In CUNY's Fall 2002 community college cohort, 87 percent started full time, but 45 percent soon became part-time; after six years, only 26 percent had graduated (Linderman & Kolenovic, 2009).

Traditional means of remediation clearly weren't working for countless CUNY students, who often squandered precious time and scarce financial aid on non-credit-bearing courses. Many abandoned hope of ever securing higher education.

With demand rising, students having great developmental needs, and government aid declining, community colleges need to become more efficient, effective, and conscious of their students' time and limited finances.

"What we need are new models that reduce the time to degree and yield better results, which is what CUNY is trying to do," Jamie P. Merisotis, president and chief executive of the Lumina Foundation, which seeks to improve higher education, told The New York Times (Pérez-Peña, 2012).

This paper presents two pioneering, evidence-based approaches to reshaping community college education that CUNY developed and implemented.

The first is Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP), which began in Fall 2007 at six community colleges. ASAP shaped into a comprehensive whole numerous best practices that had worked in isolation to improve community college retention, performance, and graduation rates.

The second is the radically different New Community College at CUNY (NCC), which opened in Fall 2012 with 322 students and is expected to grow at most to 5,000. CUNY's seventh community college is its first new one in more than 40 years. NCC seeks high rates of graduation, transfer to baccalaureate programs and solid preparation for

work. It requires students to attend full time and to take the same, highly structured, interdisciplinary, four-course curriculum in the first year. All classes incorporate developmental work.

The City University of New York is the ideal place to develop and test innovations in community college education because of its size, resources, and talented and polyglot student body. It had 87,500 community college students in Fall 2012.

CUNY has served waves of impoverished and immigrant students at what are now 24 undergraduate and graduate institutions that serve more than 266,000 degree-credit students and more than 223,000 adult, continuing and professional education students (Goldstein, 2013). Forty-one percent are foreign-born. At community colleges, the Dominican Republic contributes18.6 percent of foreign-born students, followed by China, Jamaica, Ecuador and Colombia. Overall, undergraduates are 18.3 percent Asian, 26.8 percent black, 29 percent Hispanic and 25.6 percent white (CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2012c).

It is important to note the context from which these initiatives emerged. In the 1990s, for complex political, social, economic, and administrative reasons, the university was stagnant. New York City's mayor (Giuliani) named an independent task force to assess the university. It determined that CUNY was "an institution adrift" and locked in "a downward spiral" (Schmidt et al., 1999). The task force's recommendations started a fundamental rethinking of university operations, setting the stage for new leadership and policy reforms.

A revamped Board of Trustees appointed a new chancellor, Matthew Goldstein, in 1999, who took numerous steps to improve baccalaureate and associate education. One measure of progress is an uptick in graduation rates, from a six-year associate- and baccalaureate-degree-completion rate of 44.2 percent for the Fall 1999 cohort to 49.8 percent for Fall 2005 cohort (C. Chellman, personal communication, March 25, 2013).

But with the persistence of low community college retention and graduation rates, the chancellor started his top staff to work on two new approaches.

Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP)

In 2007, in a competitive process, New York City's new mayor (Bloomberg) awarded CUNY nearly
$20 million over three years to launch ASAP. Its goal was to raise the community college graduation rate to 50 percent within three years (CUNY, 2007; Fisher 2007).

  Educators from CUNY's Office of Academic Affairs and from across the university created a model that removes most financial barriers to full-time attendance. ASAP waives any gap between a student's financial aid and tuition and fees, provides free textbooks, and offers monthly MetroCards for subway and bus travel. Program elements include:

• Full-time study (at least 12 credits per semester).
• A limited number of majors (Appendix A).
• Consolidated course schedules.
• Blocked ASAP-only courses for the first year and cohort course-taking thereafter.
• Small classes.
• Full-time, dedicated staff for comprehensive advisement, career development, and academic support.
• Recommended study during optional winter and summer sessions to earn more credits or retake any failed classes.
• Workshops on interviewing, job skills, and career planning. If students need to work, specialists help find jobs that allow full-time study.
• Informal, student-created study groups.
• The ASAP Seminar, a weekly, noncredit, a group-advisement program. Initially, it used Skip Downing's "On Course: Strategies for Creating Success in College and in Life;" ASAP later crafted its own curriculum.
• A three-day Summer Institute to introduce incoming students to time management, study habits, self-advocacy, navigating the college system, and using campus resources (Linderman & Kolenovic, 2009, pp. 10-11).
• Starting in Summer 2008, graduate interns from the Hunter College School of Social Work, directed by a licensed social worker, havecounseled and referred ASAP students with personal issues.

For Fall 2007, the colleges recruited 1,132 skills-proficient students who either had not planned on college or had already applied to a CUNY community college; 319 (28 percent) completed developmental courses that summer.

Method

ASAP has used three kinds of assessments, one internal and two external, to measure effectiveness.

The CUNY Office of Academic Affairs undertakes quantitative data analysis and uses a quasi-experimental constructed comparison group design. It includes surveys, focus groups, and analysis of student-staff contact data to evaluate student satisfaction and program implementation.

ASAP contracted with MDRC, a nonprofit, nonpartisan education and social policy research organization. Since Spring 2010, MDRC has been conducting a five-year, random-assignment study involving 900 students at Borough of Manhattan, Kingsborough, and LaGuardia Community Colleges. It examines ASAP's effects on these outcome variables: earned credits, progress in developmental education, degree or certificate attainment, enrollment, persistence, and transfer to four-year institutions.

Scrivener, Weiss, and Sommo (2012) explain (p. 9):

> "MDRC worked with staff from the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs and the participating colleges to develop procedures to build the research sample. ASAP staff at each college invited eligible students to participate in the evaluation through letters, emails, and phone calls. Students who attended an intake session on campus, during which staff described the ASAP program and evaluation, and agreed to take part in the study, completed an Informed Consent Form and Baseline Information Form (BIF) containing questions about students' background characteristics. After completing these forms, each student was assigned, at random, either to the program group, whose members have the

> opportunity to participate in ASAP, or to the control group, whose members receive the college's standard services. As compensation for their time, students received a one-week MetroCard for use on public transportation [citation omitted]. The colleges randomly assigned two groups (or cohorts) of students for the ASAP evaluation …"

MDRC also looks at differences between how the three colleges implement ASAP, whether ASAP participants use college services differently than do control group members, and at program costs. "Although the evaluation is not designed to definitively determine which components of ASAP matter the most — because the entire ASAP package is being compared with services as usual — the implementation research should shed light on that issue" (Scrivener, Weiss, & Sommo, 2012, p. 5).

CUNY also commissioned Henry Levin, the William Heard Kilpatrick professor of economics and education at Columbia University's Teachers College and director of its Center for Benefit-Cost Studies of Education, "to see if the additional costs [of ASAP] were compensated by a higher graduation rate sufficient to justify those costs" (Levin & Garcia, p. 3); that part is completed. The analysis discusses the complex factors that underlie the conclusions (pp. 8-10), ending with:

> [W]e have used the combined ASAP expenditures from CUNY Central and the six community colleges to provide an overall picture of the costs of both the normal production of associate degrees and the costs for those in ASAP. Since the numbers of students in ASAP at each of the six institutions differs significantly, the costs are weighted according to institutional representation in the overall sample, rather than simply obtaining an average among the institutions …

For comparability, they wrote:

1. The cohorts … had to be selected with a similar or nearly similar time window to assess their costs and effectiveness.

2. The academic majors of students in the two groups had to be broadly

similar.

3. Developmental education costs would not be included for either group, as any basic skills needs were addressed prior to the period of this analysis.

In a second study, expected in spring 2013, Levin will examine the benefits of timely graduation and increased associate-degree production for individuals and society.

Results and Discussion

The university's two-year evaluation found that as of August 2009, 341 ofthe original 1,132 students had earned an associate degree, or 30.1 percent. That contrasts with 11.4 percent in a matched comparison group (Table 1). Linderman and Kolenovic (2009, p. 11) wrote:

> As of fall 2009, more than 90% of ASAP 2-year graduates indicated plans to transfer to 4-year colleges to work towards a bachelor's degree. According to an exit survey of graduating students, 75% of ASAP 2-year graduates planned to attend a CUNY senior college and 15% planned to attend other 4-year colleges [citation omitted]. The remaining 10% of ASAP 2-year graduates planned to enter the workforce, with the vast majority indicating plans to return to college to continue their education in the near future.
>
> On the 2008/09 annual student survey… ASAP graduates overwhelmingly credit the financial incentives and comprehensive advisement support as key reasons why they were able to complete their Associate's degrees in record time.

Table 1*

Two-Year Graduation Rates of ASAP and Fall 2006 Comparison Group Graduates. Graduation Rates based on First ASAP Cohort

Characteristic	ASAP (Fall 2007)[a]			Comparison Group (Fall 2006)[b]		
	Original Cohort	ASAP Graduates Through August 2009		Original Cohort	Comparison Group Graduates Through August 2008	
	N	N	%	N	N	%
Headcount	1,132	341	~~	1,791	205	~~
2 Year Graduation Rate	~~	~~	30.1	~~	~~	11.4
College						
BMCC	249	59	23.7	496	44	8.9
Bronx	118	20	16.9	63	3	4.8
Hostos	82	21	25.6	41	9	22.0
Kingsborough	247	114	46.2	404	72	17.8
LaGuardia	208	60	28.8	289	36	12.5
Queensborough	228	67	29.4	498	41	8.2
Gender						
Male	516	120	23.3	838	68	8.1
Female	616	221	35.9	953	137	14.4
Race/Ethnicity[c]						
American Indian/Native Alaskan	2	2	100.0	3	0	0.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	116	53	45.7	279	43	15.4
Black	357	90	25.2	481	40	8.3
Hispanic	421	114	27.1	523	48	9.2
White	236	82	34.7	505	74	14.7
Age[d]						
18 or younger	660	210	31.8	628	65	10.4
19 or 20	251	62	24.7	646	74	11.5
21 to 23	96	28	29.2	296	31	10.5
24 or older	125	41	32.8	221	35	15.8
Pell (need-based U.S. tuition grant)[d]						
Receiving Pell	633	199	31.4	983	130	13.2
Not Receiving Pell	499	142	28.5	808	75	9.3
Admission Type						
First-time Freshmen	852	251	29.5	660	61	9.2
Transfer Students	107	22	20.6	400	48	12.0
Continuing Students	173	68	39.3	731	96	13.1

a. Excludes 37 students who "shadowed" the Fall 2007 ASAP cohort and joined ASAP in Spring 2008.
b. Fall 2006 full-time associate students who started with 12 or fewer credits, proficiency in reading, writing and math, not in developmental courses, not in College Discovery, are NYC residents, and enrolled in majors offered to ASAP students in Fall 2007.
c. CUNY Office of Institutional Research imputed ethnicity for students who did not select one or chose "other" on CUNY application.
d. Based on data at time of entry. For ASAP based on Fall 2007; for comparison group based on Fall 2006.
Date: September 21, 2009
Source: CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment
* From Linderman and Kolenovic, 2009, Table 3, page 15.

   ASAP then recruited 431 low-income students who needed one or two developmental courses (Appendix B). They joined 403 continuing students in Fall 2009. Closely mirroring typical CUNY demographics, 76 percent had some developmental need and all were low-income, defined as receiving need-based financial aid.
   As of September 2010, after three years of operation, 55 percent of all ASAP participants – including those with one or two developmental needs – had earned associate degrees, compared to 20 percent of non-ASAP students who needed remediation. The, 2007, cohort, who started skills-proficient, also had a 55 percent three-year graduation rate, versus 24.7 percent for the matched comparison group. Looking at all the successful outcomes – meaning graduation or transfer to a baccalaureate-level college for at least one semester – the first cohort had a 63.1 percent success rate, versus 44.4 percent for the comparison group (Linderman & Kolenovic, 2012, p. 20; see Table 2).

Table 2*

Three-Year Successful Outcome Analysis of ASAP Cohort One Students: Graduates and Four-Year College Transfers (Using CUNY and National Clearinghouse Data)

College	Cohort	Total 3-Yr Graduates[a]		Total 4-Yr College Transfers[b] (Grads and Non-Grads)		Total 3-Yr Successful Outcomes[c] (Transferred or Graduated)	
	N	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fall 2007 Original ASAP Cohort							
BMCC	249	135	54.2	114	45.8	154	61.8
Bronx	118	59	50.0	47	39.8	72	61.0
Hostos	82	39	47.6	27	32.9	42	51.2
Kingsborough	247	151	61.1	152	61.5	178	72.1
LaGuardia	208	105	50.5	88	42.3	126	60.6
Queensborough	228	134	58.8	114	50.0	142	62.3
Total	1,132	623	55.0	542	47.9	714	63.1
Fall 2006 Comparison Group[d]							
BMCC	496	117	23.6	162	32.7	215	43.3
Bronx	63	11	17.5	14	22.2	21	33.3
Hostos	41	17	41.5	17	41.5	24	58.5
Kingsborough	404	125	30.9	163	40.3	207	51.2
LaGuardia	289	64	22.1	93	32.2	116	40.1
Queensborough	498	108	21.7	179	35.9	212	42.6
Total	1,791	442	24.7	628	35.1	795	44.4

a. Excludes 37 students who "shadowed" the Fall 2007 ASAP cohort and joined ASAP in Spring 2008.

b. Fall 2006 full-time associate students who started with 12 or fewer credits, proficiency in reading, writing and math, not in developmental courses, not in College Discovery, are NYC residents, and enrolled in majors offered to ASAP students in Fall 2007.

c. CUNY Office of Institutional Research imputed ethnicity for students who did not select one or chose "other" on CUNY application.

d. Based on data at time of entry. For ASAP based on Fall 2007; for comparison group based on Fall 2006.

Date: September 21, 2009

Source: CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

Since many students take more than three years to complete their degrees, CUNY looked at four-year outcomes for the 2007 cohort: 58.2 percent earned an associate degree, versus 29.7 percent for the comparison group. Another 4.2 percent earned bachelor's degrees, versus 2.8 percent of similar students, and 4.1 percent earned both degrees, compared to 1.9 percent of other students; this indicates that ASAP students prefer to earn an associate degree prior to starting a baccalaureate program, while students in the comparison group tend to pursue a bachelor's without first earning an associate degree (Linderman & Kolenovic, 2012, p. 23; see Table 3). The Fall 2009 cohort had a two-year graduation rate of 27.5 percent, compared to 7.2 percent for the comparison group (ibid, p. 3).

Table 3*
Four-Year CUNY-wide Graduation Outcomes[a] of ASAP Cohort One Students

College	Cohort N	Associate Degree Recipients		Baccalaureate Degree Recipients		Associate and Baccalaureate Degree Recipients		Associate and/or Baccalaureate Degree Recipients[b]	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fall 2007 Original ASAP Cohort									
BMCC	249	132	53.0	7	2.8	7	2.8	132	53.0
Bronx	118	66	55.9	2	1.7	2	1.7	66	55.9
Hostos	82	43	52.4	3	3.7	3	3.7	43	52.4
KBCC	247	159	64.4	15	6.1	13	5.3	161	65.2
LaGuardia	208	119	57.2	9	4.3	9	4.3	119	57.2
Queensborough	228	140	61.4	12	5.3	12	5.3	140	61.4
Total	1,132	659	58.2	48	4.2	46	4.1	661	58.4
Fall 2006 Comparison Group[c]									
BMCC	496	150	30.2	15	3.0	8	1.6	157	31.7
Bronx	63	12	19.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	12	19.0
Hostos	41	17	41.5	1	2.4	1	2.4	17	41.5
KBCC	404	141	34.9	13	3.2	11	2.7	143	35.4
LaGuardia	289	77	26.	6 5	1.7	4	1.4	78	27.0
Queensborough	498	135	27.1	17	3.4	10	2.0	142	28.5
Total	1,791	532	29.7	51	2.8	34	1.9	549	30.7

a. Includes graduates who obtained associate or baccalaureate degree at a CUNY institution through the summer of their fourth year.
b. Unduplicated count of students who obtained any undergraduate degree within four years.

c. Fall 2006 full-time associate students who started with 12 or fewer credits, proficiency in reading, writing and math, not in developmental courses, not in College Discovery, are NYC residents, and enrolled in majors offered to ASAP students in Fall 2007.
Date: April 1,
Source: CUNY Office of Institutional Research
* Linderman and Kolenovic, 2012, Table 5, p. 23

MDRC study. This evaluation shows that ASAP participants had higher full-time enrollment, credits earned, completion of developmental coursework, and first-to-second semester retention than comparable CUNY community college students (Scrivener, Weiss, & Sommo, 2012).

Noting that it had studied 15 programs that sought to increase academic success at community colleges, MDRC wrote:

> Half had positive statistically significant average impacts on total credits earned after the first semester of study, indicating that the programs were improving students' progress towards a degree. Impact estimates (regardless of statistical significance) ranged from 0.0 to 1.4 total credits earned. *During the first semester, ASAP's impact on total credits earned was 2.1 credits, 150 percent as large as the next largest impact estimate MDRC has observed to date [emphasis added]* (p. 31).

MDRC found that only two initiatives had improved second-semester enrollment rates: "One had a 15-percentage-point impact … [Other] impacts ranged from approximately 1 to 7 percentage points (regardless of statistical significance). *The estimated impact of ASAP on second semester enrollment is 10 percentage points [emphasis added]*" (ibid).
Most significantly, Scrivener et al. (2012) wrote,

> While MDRC's studies are not necessarily representative of all experimental research in community colleges, this comparison

suggests that the early effects of ASAP are larger than what has beenobserved in many other rigorous evaluations of promising programs….

It is also important to emphasize that most of ASAP's supports and services last for three years. To the authors' knowledge, this is longer than any community college program that has been evaluated using a random assignment research design. Will the early impacts be maintained? Might they grow larger? Will early impacts translate into impacts on degree completion, the main goal of ASAP? The answers to these questions are a critical part of the developing story about this program and will be a focus of future MDRC reports (ibid).

Cost-benefit analysis. ASAP was found to save about $6,500 per graduate despite the higher up-front costs of financial incentives, staffing, and program services. "If these students were distributed in proportion to the overall enrollments of each institution as we might expect in a system expansion of ASAP, the savings would be about $6,600 per gradate in a three-year comparison," he wrote (Levin & Garcia, 2012, p. 19; see Table 4).

   "The conclusion is that ASAP is so much more effective in producing additional graduates in a timely fashion and that the cost per graduate for ASAP is comparable to or less than that of the traditional approach. ASAP can increase considerably the number of CUNY community college graduates while actually reducing costs," Levin wrote (Levin & Garcia, 2012, p. 4).

   Since ASAP's graduation rate was more than twice as high as the comparison group and the extra amount spent per ASAP full-time equivalent (FTE) is only about 50 percent higher, "one might expect cost savings to be even greater," he wrote. However, while ASAP retained most students, enrollment in the comparison group plunged early in the three-year study, most likely because students in realized they weren't likely to succeed; that reduced the costs of the conventional program.

      "This phenomenon… reduces institutional costs and retains only

the most promising students who make fewer demands on the college. ASAP is devoted to meeting the needs of these groups with additional resources, and their higher continuation rates raise the cost per student, but also provide much higher completion rates," (Levin & Garcia, 2012, p. 20).

Given these results, CUNY plans to double ASAP's reach. The initiative is expanding from the current 2,312 participants to more than 4,000 by Fall 2014 (CUNY 2012).

Table 4*
Cost per Cohort (all FTEs) and per Graduate Over Three Years

CUNY Community College	Cost for Each Cohort[a]		Number of Graduates		Cost per Graduate in Each Cohort[b]		Cost Saving per ASAP Graduate
	Fall 2006 Comparison Group	Fall 2007 ASAP Group	Fall 2006 Comparison Group	Fall 2007 ASAP Group	Fall 2006 Comparison Group	Fall 2007 ASAP Group	~~
BMCC	$6,008,986	$6,195,610	114	131	$52,710	$47,295	$5,416
Bronx	$903,849	$3,745,997	10	58	$90,385	$64,586	$25,799
Hostos	$938,790	$2,879,805	16	41	$58,674	$70,239	($11,565)
Kingsborough	$5,483,627	$7,722,766	120	150	$45,697	$51,485	($5,788)
LaGuardia	$4,224,483	$6,186,281	66	106	$64,007	$58,361	$5,646
Queensborough	$7,468,808	$6,994,728	106	135	$70,460	$51,813	$18,648
Average cost per graduate	~~	~~	~~	~~	$63,656	$57,297	$6,359
Average cost per graduate proportioned to enrollment	~~	~~	~~	~~	~~	~~	$6,576

a. Using average cost per FTE per semester and number of FTE per semester.
b. Cost per cohort divided by number of graduates.
c. Enrollment trends: Fall 2010, City University of New York.
* From Levin et al., p. 19, Table 5. The authors note variance among institutions, particularly at Hostos, with relatively few ASAP students, but which spent more per FTE in the comparison group, producing a much higher completion rate than in comparison groups at other colleges.

The New Community College at CUNY (NCC)

For the same reasons, and more, Goldstein directed the CUNY administration to investigate "whether a [new] community college structured differently might better address the persistent challenges of improving graduation rates" (Mogulescu, 2009).

> The fact was that CUNY would be developing a new college, not to alleviate space problems, but rather to try to determine whether a new model, nothing like anything presently at CUNY, would deliver better results. CUNY's community colleges do a good job of providing career opportunities to their students, but too few of them graduate and many of those who do graduate take six or more years to earn their associate degrees (ibid).

A planning team from the Office of Academic Affairs developed a model for the new college, looking only for evidence-based, research-supported ideas. The planners delved into academics and student services, budget, facilities, information systems and technology, admission, financial aid, the library and more. They conducted more than 150 meetings and involved well over 200 people from CUNY colleges, high schools, and community-based organizations. Higher education experts from around the United States formed a national advisory board. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation awarded planning grants. (Gates, the Lumina Foundation and the Robin Hood Foundation are helping to support NCC's first two years of operation).

The resulting 2008 concept paper (CUNY, 2008) drew positive reactions, including:

W. Norton Grubb, the David Pierpont Gardner professor in higher education, Graduate School of Education at University of California, Berkeley, said NCC "would move away from the current model of a highly informal institution, where students do pretty much what they want and subordinate their education to all other aspects of their lives, to

one that takes on a definite structure and set of requirements" (W.N. Grubb, personal communication, 2008).

Thomas R. Bailey, the George and Abby O'Neill professor of economics and education at Teachers College, Columbia University, said he was enthusiastic about "dispensing with the distinction between developmental and college ready students, a more comprehensive approach to assessment, limited course options that are organized into learning community formats, [and] the use of case studies to teach a range of skills" (T. R. Bailey, personal communication, 2008).

Randy Bass, assistant provost for teaching and learning initiatives at Georgetown University, said the vision "jibes well with what I know of effective community college practice." He referred to the Carnegie Foundation's Strengthening Pre-Collegiate Education in Community Colleges (SPECC) project of 2007-2009, which stressed "'high structure' and 'high challenge,' and the importance of 'intentionality in learning.' These are all built into the DNA of the proposal very well" (R. Bass, personal communication, 2008).

In 2012, the Board of Trustees approved a novel governance structure in a resolution stating:

> [I]t is appropriate for the New Community College to have an initial governance plan to guide its operations during its early years, with the understanding that as it grows and develops, the College will likely amend the governance plan to meet new circumstances ... It incorporates a simplified structure appropriate to a small start-up institution with an interdisciplinary core curriculum and a limited number of majors. Over time, there may be a need to include provisions for the election of faculty representatives to the College Council (rather than having all faculty serve), the election of adjunct faculty to the College Council, the establishment of programs and program officers, and other provisions appropriate to a large, highly structured institution (CUNY Board of Trustees, 2012).

Here are NCC's key elements:

Admissions. Like all CUNY community colleges, NCC has open admissions; anyone with a high school diploma or the equivalent can have a seat, assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. However, to ensure that students understand what they're getting into, NCC has a three-step admission process: Students list NCC as a choice on CUNY's online application (CUNY, Prepare to Apply). They attend a group information session to learn more about the college and financial aid. Then they meet individually with a member of the NCC community for a deeper conversation about the college's model and expectations.

Summer Bridge. The two-and-a-half-week Summer Bridge Program orients students to NCC's unique approach, starts building them into a community, and acclimates them to the differences between high school and college-level work. The focus is not on assessing deficits, as in many preadmission programs, but on giving students opportunities to practice the kinds of skills they need to succeed in the fall City Seminar course.

Instructional teams. Since developing personal relationships with peers, faculty, and staff has been shown to help students succeed and remain in college, NCC places students into learning communities, called houses. Faculty and key staff sit in workstations in the same area, rather than in offices, making it easy for students to find the people they need. Staff are cross-trained in the one-stop student service center, which includes admissions, financial aid, the registrar and the bursar. The Partnership Office connects with businesses, nonprofit organizations, government agencies and professional associations, which both strengthens the Ethnographies of Learning course and can lead to employment opportunities for students.

 Each house has student success advocates, who are staff; graduate coordinators, who are CUNY graduate students; and peer mentors. The first cadre of peer mentors was drawn from other CUNY colleges, but future mentors will be second-year NCC students. The graduate coordinators and peer mentors provide extra academic support.

Faculty. There are no traditional departments by discipline. Rather,

professors are appointed to the college as a whole and are assigned to houses for teaching. As of Spring 2013, there were 21 full-time and 12 adjunct faculty members, and NCC was recruiting for 11 more positions. Faculty are assigned to each house and teach the centerpiece of NCC'scurriculum, the City Seminar, and other courses in accordance with university agreements on faculty workload.

Placement. Students are placed using an asset-based approach that builds on their strengths. Although students who have not otherwise demonstrated proficiency are asked to take the CUNY reading and writing Compass exams required of all entering students, these are not used for placement. Only students who have demonstrated proficiency in mathematics on those exams are placed in a 12-week statistics course; students who do not demonstrate math proficiency take a 24-week version of that course. See Weinbaum, Rodriguez, and Bauer-Maglin (2013) for fuller discussion.

First-Year Courses.   NCC offers an integrated liberal arts and occupational curriculum organized around the college's central theme: problem-solving for the future of New York City. Students attend full-time and all take the same, highly structured, interdisciplinary, curriculum that incorporates developmental work:

• City Seminar, a two-semester course, addresses critical issues facing New York City and other urban centers. The Fall 2012 topic was "From Transaction to Trash: The Life Cycle of Stuff." City Seminar's components build competencies in reading, writing, and quantitative reasoning.
• Ethnographies of Work, also two semesters, links academic and professional learning via the tools of sociology and anthropology. Students explore work related to the college's majors to "train students in critical observation and analysis through the use of ethnographic methods, provide professional skill training, and help students think in depth about their future pursuits both academic and career-related" (Weinbaum et al., 2013, p. 28).
• Statistics, chosen as the mathematics field with the greatest use

in everyday life, is the only course in which students are grouped by skill level.

• Composition is thematically linked to the second semester of the City Seminar; it introduces the writing process and the principles of academic research.

Academic and personal support. Each cohort meets with a student success advocate for 90 minutes a week in a period called LABSS(Learning About Being a Successful Student). The 90-minute Group Work Space – or Studio in the spring semester – staffed by two peer mentors and a graduate coordinator, is required once a week.

Calendar. Instead of the conventional semester, NCC has 12-week and six-week sessions each fall and spring. Students who pass a course in the 12-week session use the six-week session for additional coursework. Those who do not pass can retake the course in the six-week session, allowing them to catch up and stay on track.

Limited majors. NCC's planners chose eight majors after researching labor market projections and trends and consulting with experts inside and outside of CUNY (see first- and second-round research reports at www.ncc.cuny.edu). They weighed which fields would engage students, sustain New York City, and provide the widest options for academic transfer and career development.

NCC started with five majors: A.A. in business administration, A.A. in human services, A.A.S. in information technology, A.A. in liberal arts and sciences, and A.A. in urban studies. In Fall 2013, NCC intends to add an A.A.S. in health information technology. Two other programs – an A.A.S in energy services management and an A.S in environmental science – will start when enrollment is large enough.

NCC has reached 10 articulation agreements with CUNY senior colleges, including at least one agreement for the five A.A. or A.S. programs and two for the A.A.S. in information technology (Weinbaum et al., pp. 28, 44).

Cost. NCC costs the same as other CUNY community colleges. Tuition,

books, fees and transportation were $5,523 a semester, or $11,046 a year, for Fall 2012. That said, 77 percent of the first cohort received financial aid. In addition, the Robin Hood Foundation funded $300 stipends for students during the Summer Bridge program and $250 per semester during the first year (Fischkin, 2013).

The university solved a peculiar Catch-22 for the first class: No new college can be accredited until the first students enroll, but financial aid cannot be offered to students until a college is accredited. In lieu of federal Title IV funds and state aid, CUNY guaranteed NCC the same amounts of aid from federal Pell and state TAP programs to which NCC students would otherwise be entitled at another CUNY college. The New York State Board of Regents voted to accredit NCC for five years on December 11, 2012.Early in 2013 the U.S. Department of Education approved provisional certification for NCC participation in Title IV programs.

With planning completed, CUNY's Board of Trustees approved creation of The New Community College in 2011 to "better address the persistent challenges of improving graduation rates and preparing students for further study and job readiness." The initial majors reflected "market interest as well as employment prospects upon graduation … While some are more focused on immediate employment and others on transferability to a senior college, all programs have been designed to allow students to achieve both goals upon graduation" (CUNY Board of Trustee minutes, 2011).

The New York State Board of Regents, which oversees education in the state, approved an amendment to CUNY's master plan on June 27, 2011, and Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo gave final approval on Sept. 20, 2011.

By then, the Board of Trustees had approved hiring Scott E. Evenbeck as NCC's founding president. Formerly a professor of psychology and dean of University College at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI), he had extensive experience in designing and assessing general education, including outcomes for student learning (CUNY Board of Trustees minutes, 2010).

The planning team had hired a few core faculty members before his arrival, giving them temporary posts at other community colleges so

they could become familiar with CUNY students as they helped shape the curriculum. Evenbeck oversaw completion of the initial faculty, the transformation of a concept paper into a dynamic operation, and the opening in rented quarters in Midtown Manhattan.

Method

NCC's "whole college model of accountability," in which faculty, students, staff, college administrators, and university officials share responsibility for student outcomes, is reflected in three of its institutional goals:

• Maintaining student learning as the primary driver for all decisions.
• Creating innovative and proactive instructional and student support practices, guided by inquiry and supported by research.
• Using ongoing assessment to inform student learning, professional development, and institutional practice.

   To ensure that assessment activities remain central, NCC integrates assessment and college-effectiveness practices:

• The Center for College Effectiveness brings together assessment and evaluation with institutional research and professional development. It also hosts professional development sessions, such as the scholarship of teaching and learning and ePortfolio pedagogy.
• Institutional learning outcomes (ILO) are based on the Lumina Foundation's Degree Qualifications Profile.
• A multi-year assessment plan is phasing in, with faculty designing signature assignments aligned with the ILO domains and assessing authentic student work and assess performance based on carefully crafted rubrics.
• Students create electronic portfolios to illustrate and reflect on their progress.
• Instructional teams work together for two full "assessment days" in the middle and end of semesters, discussing student progress and reviewing

student data presented by the Center for College Effectiveness.
• The College Council's Assessment and Professional Development Committee identifies areas of need in assessment and professional development.
• A Research Advisory Committee informs NCC's research agenda.

   By embracing this assessment and effectiveness framework, NCC expects to:

• Achieve a three-year graduation rate of 35 percent.
• Increase degree attainment among those least likely to stay in college.
• Enable graduates to actively participate in New York City's workforce.
• Serve as a laboratory for research-based innovation in community college education.

Results and Discussion

The college opened in Fall 2012 with 322 students. The information sessions drew 855 prospects; 504 attended individual interviews, and 492 met all NCC requirements. The inaugural class, roughly half male, half female, was divided into four houses, each with three cohorts of approximately 25 students.
   After little more than a semester of operation, there are not yet enough data to conclude whether the NCC model is effective. However, 92 percent of the initial students re-enrolled for the spring term, compared to 84.9 percent for comparable CUNY community college freshmen in 2011-2012 (C. Chellman, personal communication, March 28, 2013).
   At the college's convocation on Aug. 20, 2012, Bloomberg received the rarely bestowed Chancellor's Medal for his role in creating ASAP and The New Community College. The mayor told students, "This is a day and age when unfortunately there's just not a lot of extra money in the city budget to support new projects, but we've made an exception for The New Community College … because I think this school has the potential to be a game-changing model for community colleges

across the country" (video posted with Fischkin).

   To give other institutions a road map to follow similar initiatives, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation funded documentarians, who chronicled NCC's creation. In their final report, Rethinking Community College for the 21st Century, Weinbaum et al. (2013) offer guideposts including:

• A well-researched concept paper provides an anchor for action.
• Leadership needs to protect and advocate for the model, while nurturing a culture of collaboration.
• Continuous communication within the university and beyond builds momentum and a constituency.
• Insulation from traditional institutional requirements is needed. For example, CUNY's human resources department initially insisted on using traditional job descriptions; rewriting them for this untraditional setting delayed hiring.
• Creating a rapid response team of "experienced and trusted surrogates" of top executives in budget, human resources, academic affairs, and information technology can quickly solve problems with the new venture's planners.
• Hiring experienced administrators who believe in the model is critical (bursar, admissions, registrar, financial aid, and information technology).
• Curriculum should be strongly linked with pedagogy within the framework of who the students are and what challenges they face.
• The induction of successive waves of faculty and staff requires a plan that addresses individual and group assets and needs.

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Appendix A. *ASAP Majors 2007 and 2009.*

2007 Cohort

Borough of Manhattan Community College
- Business / Accounting (A.A.S.)
- Business Management (A.A.S.)
- Early Childhood Education (A.S.)
- Human Services (A.S.)
- Liberal Arts (A.A.)

Bronx Community College
- Business Administration (A.S.)
- Liberal Arts (A.A.)
- Radiologic Technology (A.A.S.)

Hostos Community College
- Business Management (A.S.)
- Community Health (A.S.)
- Early Childhood Education (A.A.S.)
- Liberal Arts (A.A.)

Kingsborough Community College
- Business Administration (A.A.S.)
- Accounting (A.A.S.)
- Liberal Arts (A.A.)
- Mental Health and Human Services (A.S.)
- Tourism and Hospitality (A.A.S.)

LaGuardia Community College
- Business Administration (A.S.)
- Business Management (A.A.S.)
- Emergency Medical Technician /
- Paramedic (A.A.S.)
- Liberal Arts (A.A.)
- Paralegal Studies (A.A.S.)

Queensborough Community College
- Accounting (A.A.S.)
- Business Management (A.A.S.)
- Computer Engineering Technology (A.A.S.)
- Electronic Engineering Technology (A.A.S.)
- Liberal Arts and Sciences (A.A.)
- Liberal Arts (A.A.)

2009 Cohort

Borough of Manhattan Community College
- Business / Accounting (A.A.S.)
- Liberal Arts (A.A./A.S.)

Bronx Community College
- Business Administration (A.S.)
- Criminal Justice (A.A.)
- Community/School Health Education (A.S.)
- Dietetics and Nutrition Science (A.S.)
- Education Associate (A.A.S.)
- Human Services (A.A.S.)
- Liberal Arts and Sciences (A.A.)
- Therapeutic Recreation (A.A.S.)

Hostos Community College
- Early Childhood Education (A.A.S.)
- Liberal Arts (A.A.)
- Community Health Education (A.S.)
- Business Management (A.S.)

Kingsborough Community College
ASAP offers most majors that can be completed in three years. Students planning on transferring to a CUNY baccalaureate-level college are strongly encouraged to consider Liberal Arts (A.A.), which satisfies the core curriculum requirements of all CUNY senior colleges.

LaGuardia Community College
- Business Administration (A.S.)
- Business Management (A.A.S.)
- Emergency Medical Technician /
- Paramedic (A.A.S.)
- Liberal Arts and Sciences (A.A.)
- Paralegal Studies (A.A.)

Queensborough Community College
- Accounting (A.A.S.)
- Business Administration (A.S.)
- Business Management (A.A.S.)
- Liberal Arts and Sciences (A.A.)
- Office Administration & Technology (A.A.S.)

Appendix B. *ASAP 2007 and 2009 Selection Criteria.*

Fall 2007 ASAP Selection Criteria

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- Be fully proficient in basic skills areas of reading, writing and math by the start of the fall 2007 semester.[a]
- Be a New York City resident.
- Enroll in and maintain full-time status in an ASAP-approved major.
- If a continuing or transfer student, have 12 or fewer college credits at the time of entry and be in good academic standing (GPA of 2.0 or above).
- Cannot be in College Discovery.[b]
- To receive the ASAP tuition waiver, must receive at least some financial aid and have a gap between tuition and fees, and award.

Fall 2009 ASAP Selection Criteria

- Be Pell-eligible or have a family income within 200% of the federal poverty guidelines.
- Need at least one but no more than two developmental courses based on scores on CUNY Skills Assessment Test.
- Be a New York City resident.
- Enroll in and maintain full-time status in an ASAP-approved major.
- If a continuing or transfer student, have 12 or fewer college credits at the time of entry and be in good academic standing (GPA of 2.0 or above).
- Cannot be in College Discovery.
- To receive the ASAP tuition waiver, must receive at least some financial aid and have a gap between tuition and fees, and award.

a Students demonstrate basic skills proficiency via SAT, ACT, New York State (NYS) Regents exams, or CUNY Skills Assessment Test.

b CUNY College Discovery assists high potential, low-income students who are not academically prepared for college work.

c U.S. need-based tuition grants.