

May 21, 2020

The Honorable Darrell Clarke
City Council President
City Hall, Room 490
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Dear Council President Clarke,

This letter is in response to questions raised at the May 18, 2020, hearing before the Committee of the Whole on the Fiscal Year 2021 proposed budget for Community College of Philadelphia. At this hearing, the following questions were asked:

Councilmember Sanchez: How do you prioritize from crisis to recovery?

Response: Quality education will be essential as the City of Philadelphia rebuilds from the COVID-19 pandemic. Community College of Philadelphia and the Octavius Catto Scholarship will be a key component of our City's economic recovery. These investments will ensure more equitable access to postsecondary degree programs, which are critical to lifting families out of poverty. [Research](#) on the Great Recession showed a stark disparity in recovery for those with some college versus those with a high school diploma or less. Specifically, the economy added 11.6 million jobs between 2010 and 2016, but the majority of these jobs were filled by those with at least some postsecondary education.¹ We cannot let this happen again.

The post-Covid-19 economy is projecting a faster pace of automation and need for workforce upskilling. As we look to recover from this unprecedented economic plummet, we need to ensure that we are providing equitable access to educational opportunities so all Philadelphians have opportunities to attain these quality jobs of the future. The Catto Scholarship includes the supports that students need to gain credentials and be ready to enter the workforce quickly, or transfer to a four-year institution. Catto Scholars can enroll in Community College of Philadelphia full-time, starting in Spring 2021. The tuition will be free for Catto Scholars, and they will receive up to \$1,500 per semester for critical basic needs supports, including food, books and transportation. Students will also have access to additional staff support to help them navigate college and careers.

Community College of Philadelphia will be the option for more and more families facing economic hardship, and for unemployed workers looking to upskill for the new economy. With the additional operating funds, and an intentional focus on bridging the gap between job seekers and employers, Community College of Philadelphia will be able to strengthen its work with entrepreneurs and high-priority business and industry sectors to grow employer-driven credential programs in Philadelphia. With the requested resources from City Council, we cannot only recover our economy, but ensure that recovery is equitable and attainable for all.

This work aligns with and directly supports City Council's Poverty Action Plan, which highlights Community College of Philadelphia throughout the plan. Specifically, the College is central to the Jobs and Education strategy by providing early college, career exposure and dual enrollment; high-quality and affordable job training, resulting in stackable credentials; career-technical education; and entrepreneurship and small-business growth through public-private partnerships. The Catto Scholarship

¹ Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, America's Divided Recovery: College Haves and Have-Nots, 2016. <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/americas-divided-recovery/>

builds on the recommendation in the plan to expand access to critical basic need supports to those seeking education and job training so that individuals can persist and complete without such needs becoming barriers to their success.

Councilmember Sanchez: Dual enrollment—is that contingent upon Catto Scholarship? Would like to see separate line items.

Response: As part of the Catto Scholarship, Community College of Philadelphia and the Administration are proposing \$350K to expand dual enrollment opportunities. This can provide dual enrollment access for about 140 students. This strategy will be a critical bridge for traditionally underrepresented high school students. By exposing students early to Community College of Philadelphia and the Catto Scholarship staff, we can ensure a seamless transition to Community College of Philadelphia.

The City's overall proposed investment in the College is \$44.1M in FY 2021, including \$36.1M in recurring operating support, \$3.3M in new operating support and \$4.8M to launch the Octavius Catto Scholarship in Spring 2021. The \$4.8M for Catto includes the \$350K for increased dual enrollment opportunities for future Catto Scholars.

Councilmember Domb: What is the total investment in Catto scholarship and total spending on Community College of Philadelphia FY 2019, FY 2020 and FY 2021 proposed?

Response: FY 2019 Actual: \$32.4M, FY 2020 Estimate: \$36.1M, FY 2021 Proposed: \$44.1M, with \$4.8M of the \$44.1M for the Catto Scholarship.

Councilmember Oh: How and/or why have we deviated from the original, historical plan to have a one-third split between City, State and student to pay for tuition?

Response: In Pennsylvania, there are 14 community colleges. For some, the local sponsor is the county; for others, it is various school districts. For Community College of Philadelphia, our local sponsor is the City of Philadelphia. Despite the clear statutory intent, neither the Commonwealth nor each community college's local sponsor have kept pace with providing their respective one-third of the operating costs. Across the Commonwealth's 14 community colleges, student tuition and other fees have accounted for far more than one-third of each college's operating costs. The College is very grateful for the increased contributions in the last few years and all that the City, City Council and the Mayor do to support Community College of Philadelphia.

Councilmember Oh: How can we reduce the cost of the Community College for the students so that they do not pay more than 1/3 of the CCP expenses?

Response: During my tenure as President of Community College of Philadelphia since 2014, we have held firm to making the College affordable for all and have only raised tuition once. Returning to this proportion of expenses requires a coordinated strategy of federal and state advocacy. We look forward to continuing to work with Council on these endeavors in the future. In the meantime, however, as we face this unprecedented moment in history, the request for additional funding from the City of Philadelphia will ensure that we can continue the College's efforts to support inclusive economic growth while also keeping tuition and fees level for students.

Councilmember Gauthier: Outline any plans for layoffs and demographics.

Response: We have to look at all options for the College. Currently we have no plans to lay off any employees.

Councilmember Gauthier: Please detail how the following are impacted by the updated proposal: Power Up Your Business.

Response: Community College of Philadelphia is estimating that, with the proposed City investment in the College, it will be able to maintain the funding level for Power Up Your Business at \$800,000.

Councilmember Thomas: Have we reconsidered the execution of the Catto Scholarship, just months after CCP was forced to drastically change from brick-and-mortar to virtual learning?

Response: COVID-19 has hit all Philadelphians, but it has hit those living in poverty the hardest. To cut off access to quality, free educational opportunities right now would only further negatively impact these families and prevent an equitable recovery.

Most of the students in the 2020 graduating class started their education in 2008, which was the start of a recession, and they experienced drastic cuts within their schools. Now they are facing a tumultuous end to their senior year. Many of their families face new economic situations and will be turning to Community College of Philadelphia to realize their postsecondary aspirations. We must ensure that these students are able to attend college, and that they have the support they deserve to continue their education. The Catto Scholarship includes the tuition AND wraparound supports that students and families will need—especially now—to continue their education. It will be critical to provide these supports during the coming academic year.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact my office.

Thank you,

Dr. Generals