



City Council Budget Hearing Testimony
Dr. Guy Generals, President of Community College of Philadelphia

To Council President Darrell Clarke and Members of City Council,

Each year, Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) submits a budget request for the upcoming fiscal year – but this year is significantly different from any other year we have faced as a city. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in job losses and declining enrollment at institutions across the country, and we know we will feel the ramifications of this turbulent time for years to come. However, the College must be part of the solution as we work to revitalize our city and our region. We are the city’s college and provide a vital pipeline of homegrown talent to the city’s workforce.

This year, members of the CCP team have worked on a budget that is reflective of the constraints we all face, while also taking into consideration the importance of our institution to this city. And, as I do each year, I would like to provide a conceptual framework for what our College is doing, and hopes to do, with your continued support.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck in March 2020, and in-person teaching and learning became an impossibility, the College swiftly and deftly transitioned coursework and student support services online. In this new reality, faculty and staff worked around the clock to ensure that students had what they needed to be successful, whether that included access to technology, financial aid, or a meal; tutorials and tips for how to manage online learning; or help with registering for classes. I am proud of the way our College community came together during this time, and continues to work together as we await the day when we can all be on campus again.

We were also thrilled to launch the Octavius Catto Scholarship, in partnership with the City of Philadelphia, this spring. This transformative scholarship offers first-time, full-time students the opportunity to attend College tuition-free. Our first cohort includes students from various backgrounds who hail from all over the city, and they have been such a welcome addition to our College. I am already looking ahead to the fall, when we can welcome our next cohort of Catto Scholars.

Despite the unusual circumstances, there were many other items of note. We broke ground on a new Career and Advanced Technology Center (CATC) in West Philadelphia that will provide training for in-demand career paths, and we are getting ready to cut the ribbon on our improved Library and Learning Commons. We introduced Enough Is Enough, a teach-in series launched after the death of George Floyd that addresses issues of racism and discrimination that still plague communities of color. We expanded our career services programs and continued to serve underrepresented student populations who were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. We enhanced our offerings designed to help Philadelphians learn and develop new skills

that will help them obtain family-sustaining jobs. And, of course, we continue to take the necessary health and safety precautions so that one day, hopefully soon, our College community can gather in-person.

As our city returns to “normal,” the College will play a pivotal role in ensuring Philadelphia is equipped with the talent and infrastructure necessary in building toward success. We are appreciative of your continuous support.

The College’s Response to COVID-19

In March 2020, COVID-19 was spreading quickly throughout the City of Philadelphia. Just after spring break, students, faculty and staff found themselves returning to campus only for a few days before transitioning to remote teaching and learning for seemingly the next few weeks.

However, it quickly became clear that there was no end in sight for the growing pandemic, and the College made the difficult decision to transition all courses online throughout the rest of the spring semester. Within a matter of days, faculty and staff worked quickly and skillfully to make a virtual learning environment a reality for all students, with limited impact to their educational experiences. More than 1,500 courses were adapted to be engaging and interactive online, while staff members ensured student support services were virtually available.

The College also created a set of resources to keep its community apprised of the latest updates and news related to the pandemic, including a COVID-19 webpage providing information about how the College was handling the pandemic; a Virtual Student Support Center, which allowed remote access to the College’s academic, financial and community support services, available by online meetings and appointments; *Community Starts Here*, a weekly e-newsletter to share College news while teaching and learning remained remote; virtual tutorials personally created by faculty, detailing how to use and access Canvas and Zoom, and assisting students new and unfamiliar to online learning; and a laptop loaner program, providing approximately 1,800 students with loaned laptops to continue their studies.

In addition, federal funding provided assistance to both students and the institution in the 2020-2021 academic year. Through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the College received approximately \$16 million. This award was split evenly between institutional and student expenses. Institutional expenses included technology, professional development and training, and additional costs associated with the transition to virtual learning. Student expenses could be used for books and supplies, transportation, food, housing, health care and child care. However, this funding was depleted by the conclusion of the spring 2021 semester – as the pandemic continues to rage on into the summer. Federal support will continue to be crucial as the College works to support students into the summer and fall of 2021.

Though the pandemic has provided new sets of challenges for the entire community, the College has dedicated a significant amount of time and resources to ensure limited impact on its daily operations.

2021 Budget Request and Proposal

The College is not requesting additional operating dollars for FY 21-22, and is appreciative of the \$48.1 million allocation from the City of Philadelphia for this fiscal year. Since FY 17-18, the College has been able to avoid an increase on tuition and fees for students, many of whom have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As our city and region look to bounce back from the pandemic, ensuring the College is able to provide affordable, quality educational opportunities that will help advance and revitalize the city's workforce is more important than ever.

Research has shown that students completing a college credential increase their earning potential by three times, and that an increased number of degree or certificate completers positively impacts the economy by meeting employers' needs. Approximately 85 percent of students working at a job eight months after they graduate from the College are employed in the Philadelphia metro area. Additionally, findings from an EMSI study, "Analysis of the Economic Impact and Return on Investment of Education: The Economic Value of The Community College of Philadelphia," demonstrate that for every dollar invested in a CCP education, Pennsylvania will see an average of \$11.10 of benefits over the course of students' careers. Therefore, an investment in the College is a sound investment in the future of the City and the Commonwealth.

The Octavius Catto Scholarship

Combining last-dollar funding with wrap-around support services, the Octavius Catto Scholarship is an evidence-based opportunity to address poverty in Philadelphia through higher education. With partnership from Mayor Kenney and the City of Philadelphia, the College is able to offer an education tuition-free to first-time, full-time College students. Catto Scholars also receive personalized support, including advising and coaching, and financial resources for food and books. Over time, the Catto Scholarship is predicted to increase student enrollment and retention, enhance college accessibility, and decrease gaps in student outcomes related to race, ethnicity and gender.

The scholarship was originally supposed to launch in fall 2020, but the decision was made to delay the initiative by a semester due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the meantime, the College and the City worked together to market the Catto Scholarship in a number of ways – through paid and earned media, in discussions with high school counselors, and direct mail. The College is especially grateful to the Mayor and members of Council for so publicly promoting the scholarship. The first cohort of Catto

Scholars began its studies in January 2021 with a warm virtual welcome from Mayor Kenney and College leadership.

The first class of Scholars includes 128 students of diverse backgrounds. Approximately 66 percent are age 22 or younger, while 10 percent are between the ages of 31 and 40. In addition, students hail from all over Philadelphia, though the three highest serving ZIP codes are 19124 (Frankford and Feltonville), 19149 (Mayfair) and 19120 (Olney).

Scholars are already touting the transformative benefits of this opportunity. Chelsea Hammond, a 30-year-old Scholar living in Holmesburg, details her experience in a monthly blog she writes for the College website. Chelsea writes that she once struggled with addiction and found herself homeless. After she overcame her addiction, she decided to head back to school, and was notified that she was eligible for the Catto Scholarship when applying to the College. Now, Chelsea is majoring in Paralegal Studies, and hopes to help those who pass through the legal system. She says, “Everyone that I have met has been extremely friendly and helpful. I met with my success coach, who set me up with services based on my needs, both personal and education related. It is nice having someone in your corner to turn to when you are just starting school. [...] I love this scholarship and I am so thankful that I was qualified to receive it. It makes my college experience so much easier by helping me financially (which allows for more study time) and providing any extra services that I may need.”

The College requests \$8.8 million in funding for FY 21-22 to continue and enhance the Catto Scholarship.

Capital Improvements

The College realizes the importance of providing students with the structural resources they need to reach their goals as they prepare for a competitive workforce. We are focused on creating an environment that inspires learning, fosters discussion and research, and attracts future students. Two exciting capital projects will aid in this work: a redesigned Library and Learning Commons, and the Career and Advanced Technology Center (CATC) in West Philadelphia.

The \$17 million Library and Learning Commons project, expected to be complete in summer 2021, will enhance the student academic support experience by integrating the services of the Library, Learning Labs and Student Academic Computing into one location with the latest technology. Improvements will include multimedia and technology rooms, a study lounge with a café, several multi-use spaces for individual and small group study, and a collaborate makerspace where students and faculty can gather to develop creative projects.

The College looks forward to welcoming students back to campus, when it is safe to do so, with this 60,000 square foot, reimagined academic space.

The College has also broken ground on the CATC, scheduled to open in fall 2022. The College has pursued federal, city and state dollars to support the project, and is also pursuing private donors. This public-facing, 75,000 square foot facility will serve the City's workforce needs, in addition to revitalizing a key section of West Philadelphia near 48th and Market streets. The goal is to bring career training and community building to the forefront of our neighborhoods through state-of-the-art facilities, support for local entrepreneurship, and hands-on learning experiences for fields that are in demand.

Due to a current lack of facilities, the capacity to grow new career-focused technical programs, or expand existing programs, is limited, despite evidence of student interest and demand. As a result, the CATC will offer an expanded suite of technical programs, including diesel technology, alternative fuels, advanced manufacturing, computer numerical controls, welding and a number of allied health programs, including medical tech, surgical tech, emergency medical technician, dental technician and certified nurse assistant.

Square footage of the auto space at the CATC will triple that of the current space, and the facility will provide new industry partnerships, such as with Toyota, that will set students up for success in in-demand career pathways. An increased number of connective and autonomous vehicles will be available for hands-on learning, and noncredit PennDOT and emissions inspector certification will bring professional mechanics in a state-of-the-art facility to hone their skills.

Electromechanics and welding will be offered in one space, allowing for interdepartmental synergy and interdisciplinary learning opportunities. In addition, additional health care lab space will provide for future, expanded health care programming.

This will also be a true community space, featuring an innovation hub for small businesses and entrepreneurs. Power Up Your Business, the College's successful City-funded training initiative for small neighborhood businesses, will be housed here. A community room and patio will be open for public use, and the Pre-College STEM Academy will better serve students and families from the following schools: Barry, Hamilton, Lea, Locke and Rhoads.

Successful Dual Enrollment Programs

The College is also continuing to prepare high school students for college life with its various offerings of Pre-College programs, which include: dual enrollment, Advance College Experience, Gateway to College and Parkway Center City Middle College. Data indicates that high school students provided with an opportunity to study at the college level are more likely to succeed while also saving on the cost of tuition.

The College implemented the Commonwealth's first Middle College, which allows for Parkway Center City Middle College students from the School District of

Philadelphia to attend College courses and graduate with an associate degree upon the completion of high school. The first cohort of Middle College students, approximately 90 students, will graduate in May 2021 with their associate degrees in liberal arts.

In addition, approximately 10 high school students from MaST Community Charter School will also graduate with associate degrees. One graduate, Daisy McDonagh, is graduating with a 4.00 GPA and is attending Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, with a major in International Rescue and Relief. She plans to attend graduate school and become a physician assistant.

Expanded Career Services Programs

Under the College's strategic plan, "Impact 2025: An Uncompromising Focus on Student Success, the College has increased investments in career services offerings, ultimately creating a Career Connections department that seeks to engage, empower and connect students to employers for work-based opportunities that align with their educational and career goals. Through individual appointments with Career Connections staff, workshops, seminars and special events, students learn how to create effective résumés, practice interviewing skills and research job opportunities.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Career Connections continued to offer its services remotely, ready to support both students looking for employment and employers looking for employees. The department engaged with more than 100 employers that posted jobs since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020. It also held its biannual student career fair and boot camp week virtually, connecting students to available opportunities.

In addition, several students were hired in the spring of 2020 to serve as COVID-19 contact tracers in the city. Most of these students worked one-on-one with Career Connections staff to prepare themselves for the recruitment and interview process. Tyshien Maddox, a CCP student working as a COVID-19 contact tracer, was interviewed by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and said, "Without CCP, I wouldn't have been able to get this job, and I'm thankful."

Service to Underserved Populations

The College serves several traditionally underserved populations, including first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students, and has even worked hard to enhance supports for these students in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. As of spring 2021, the College's new CCP Cares initiative has fielded more than 900 requests through its intake form. This resource, launched in January 2020, manages requests from students in immediate need, aiming to respond to students within a single business day. Requests range from students needing assistance with paying their bills, and students facing food and housing insecurity, to students needing assistance with registering for classes and financial aid.

The Keystone Education Yields Success (KEYS) program assists students who receive public assistance (TANF and SNAP) with academic support and resources from within and outside of the College. The KEYS program saw twenty of its students graduate in May 2020.

Other initiatives to expand access to educational opportunities for underserved populations include the Octavius Catto Scholarship, as outlined above, the Center for Male Engagement (CME), and the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program. CME is a federally-funded cohort-based program designed to increase the retention rates and academic outcomes of African-American males and other male students of color through intentional, holistic and culturally responsive programming. Each participant is assigned a support coach who helps the students adapt to the college environment and find ways to lessen some of the barriers to academic and personal success. CCAMPIS, thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, provides \$833 per month per student during the academic year to satisfy the child care needs of Pell-eligible students with children. By helping to pay for child care costs, this initiative helps lower-income student-parents manage the costs of child care and attending college, helping many students who otherwise may have left school to graduate.

Enhanced Opportunities for Philadelphians to Upskill

A key component of the College's mission is to prepare students for the jobs of the future, and to connect students with the world of work in ways that allow them to direct their learning to fields that fuel their personal ambitions and the region's economic opportunities.

However, in Philadelphia, there remains a large gap between current workforce skills and the jobs available – especially in the fields of computers, math and science. An increasing number of jobs also require some type of postsecondary training or degree. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a significant job loss among low-wage workers, a majority of whom are women of all races, and men of color. As a result, the ability to provide Philadelphians the opportunity to learn additional skills is critical.

Job trends and needed career skills are considered when developing both credit programs and degree offerings, and noncredit and workforce opportunities. In the noncredit space, the College's Division of Workforce Development and Economic Innovation partners with leaders in key industries, which helps inform some of its programming. Newer programming related to in-demand jobs include Dialysis Technician, Infectious Disease and Infection Control, Managing Employees Remotely and EKG Technician.

Other continued professional education and career training offerings are provided year-round. Power Up Your Business is one such program that has been particularly

successful. The College-led initiative provides education, training and targeted assistance for the small businesses that serve as drivers in the neighborhood economy. The initiative's Store Owner Series includes free workshops on topics such as social media strategy, financial management, understanding City taxes and other areas. The Peer-based Learning Experience is a 12-week, cohort-based small business boot camp that provides training and coaching support during and for one year after program completion. In Power Up's four-and-a-half year existence, 284 businesses have participated, and 13 cohorts have graduated. More than 900 entrepreneurs have accessed workshops since the pandemic. Eighty-one percent of businesses, on average, are minority-owned, and seventy-one percent are women-owned. And the curriculum has been translated into Spanish, Russian and Mandarin, with one cohort operating fully in Spanish.

In addition, the Goldman Sachs *10,000 Small Businesses* program at the College provides small area businesses with the tools and professional supports they need to develop a strategic and customized growth plan that will take their businesses to the next level. In fact, twenty-three of the 100 fastest growing businesses in 2019 recognized by the Entrepreneurs Forum at the *Philadelphia Inquirer's* "Philly 100" event were *10,000 Small Businesses* graduates. More than 660 businesses have completed the program, now in its eighth year. Seventy percent of graduates have increased revenue, while half have increased jobs.

Other opportunities include: the Pathway to Advanced Manufacturing Program, offering training in the areas of Computer Numerical Control (CNC), Precision Machining, DC-AC Electricity and Welding Technology; the Career Readiness Soft Skills Pre-Apprenticeship Program, which teaches the critical soft skills needed to find and keep employment; the Industrial Maintenance Technician Pre-Apprenticeship Program, designed to prepare participants for entry-level employment in manufacturing careers like hydraulics, industrial electricity and mechanical components; and the Biomedical Technician Training Program, a partnership with the Wistar Institute that offers students a structured path toward research technician careers through courses at the College and supervised, hands-on laboratory experience at the Wistar Institute or an affiliated training site.

In recent months, alum Yaya Dia has gained experience by working in a lab at the Wistar Institute that is devising strategies to combat COVID-19. He has worked alongside colleagues with advanced degrees. Of his experience, he's said, "I would say the advantage of being within this program is that it opens many doors. I certainly enjoy what I'm doing, but for me, this is sort of a transitioning or step. I want to go to a physician assistant school. I want to work in the medical field because I've always had a passion for patients."

The College is also enthusiastic that the Career and Advanced Technology Center (CATC) coming to West Philadelphia in 2022, as previously discussed, will provide in-demand skilled and technical talent to the region and expand access to family sustaining jobs.

Anticipating a Fall 2021 Return to Campus

As the COVID-19 vaccine becomes more widely available, the College is moving ahead with plans to bring as many staff, students and faculty back to campus as safely as possible for the fall 2021 semester. Return-to-campus plans will vary by program and office, and some classes will remain remote, while others will be hybrid or face-to-face. However, the health and safety of our College community will remain our top priority and will guide decision making. The College will continue to follow guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), state and City.

The College has been open for essential, on-campus services since summer of 2020, and expanded cleaning protocols were put in place in March 2020, and will continue for as long as necessary.

More recently, the College has enlisted the services of Pennoni, an engineering consulting firm here in Philadelphia. A team of Pennoni's certified industrial hygienists and registered environmental health professionals will work with College leadership to ensure the College remains a safe, healthy and welcoming place as more people return to campus. Specifically, Pennoni will: review existing College documentation (including the contact tracing plan, cleaning/disinfection protocols and others) and make recommendations on best practices; help develop plans for reopening, based on CDC guidelines, which may include public areas and classroom spacing and occupancy, food service areas, cleaning/disinfection, sports and activities, lab programs, and environmental safety; conduct walk-throughs and inspections of buildings on campus to evaluate signage, physical barriers, social distancing and other issues; and administer environmental testing when needed.

The College has also encouraged individuals who are able to be vaccinated, to wear masks and continue to social distance, and anticipates the day when all faculty, staff and students can safely return to campus to teach and learn alongside one another.

Again, I thank you for your leadership.



Dr. Guy Generalis
President, Community College of Philadelphia

