

Community College of Philadelphia
Budget Testimony for Tuesday, May 10th

Philadelphia City Council Chambers, 1:30 PM

Good morning, Council President Clarke and Council members:

Community College of Philadelphia is requesting \$33.9 million from the City's general fund, an increase of \$3.6 million over the amount received in fiscal year 2015-16.

The increased funding will allow us to maintain our commitment to providing Philadelphians with affordable tuition. With your help, every effort will be made to offset tuition increases.

Community Colleges play a more vital role than ever in fostering a healthy economy and skilled workforce. This

past year, we expanded the avenues into the middle class by offering the groundbreaking 50th Anniversary Scholars Program; which offers highly motivated high school graduates in Philadelphia a guided path to degree completion. Because of our leadership in advancing the call for free tuition, Vice President Joe Biden and Dr. Jill Biden visited our campus to underscore the importance of providing these accessible pathways. The first year, the College had a total of 217 scholars, a number of whom were the first in their families to attend college. The additional funding will allow us to sustain this important program and give more of the City's citizens the opportunity to realize their dreams.

Our records indicate that thousands of students walk away from the College each year because of their inability

to meet the remaining tuition balance after financial aid is applied.

The additional funding requested for fiscal year 2016-17 will enable Community College of Philadelphia—the City’s College—to improve student success, retention and completion rates. We will expand partnerships with local businesses and community organizations, create world-class facilities, further align ourselves with the Philadelphia School District, and position the College to connect and engage in meaningful ways to the neighborhoods throughout the city.

During the past fiscal year, the College has developed a vision of becoming a premier community college. Our related strategies include an uncompromising focus on student success; a primary role in workforce development

and economic innovation; mutually beneficial external and internal relations; world-class facilities; and fiscal stability and sustainability. Many of you have seen our vision statement.

Every day, we step back and ask: What can we do for our students? What can we do for our City? This year is one where our impact was clear. In December, I joined Philadelphia District Attorney R. Seth Williams in announcing Future Forward, an initiative which provides eligible Philadelphians charged with a non-violent felony crime, an alternative to incarceration.

The College confronted the educational crises facing young men of color with visionary leadership. Twenty-nine students from our renowned Center for Male Engagement were candidates for graduation this year. One of its

graduates, Muriyd (Muh-reed) Fuller, a Liberal Arts Honors Option major, has been accepted at the University of Pennsylvania, and he hopes to attend there this fall.

Overall, the Class of 2016 had 2,056 candidates for graduation on May 7th, receiving both degrees and certificates. More students are meeting their goals.

Between 2005 and 2015, there has been a 38 percent increase in the number of graduates, and a 46 percent increase in the number of degrees and certificates awarded.

Developing a 21st century workforce is key to the continued success of Philadelphia. To this end, the College elevated the leadership of Workforce and Economic Innovation to a cabinet-level position.

We believe the economic growth experienced by many must extend to residents who are either unemployed or underemployed. The economy has reached the point where traditional employment opportunities for those with a high school education, or some college, are far apart and few between, and rarely pay a livable wage. Thus, we are aligning the curriculum to meet the demands of high-priority industries. This fall, the College will launch an advanced manufacturing program at Benjamin Franklin High School's Center for Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering, that will target 100 adult learners in welding, precision machining, and mechanical maintenance programs.

If we are to continue to build a culture that identifies and celebrates our students' strengths, and deepens learning,

we need your help. As you know, fixed costs continue to rise while the relative costs of State and local sponsors have fallen. Over the last decade, the increase in the students' financial burdens has grown dramatically. We are looking to identify and develop new revenue sources by expanding our enrollment base, and focusing on workforce development and customized-training programs.

Community College of Philadelphia is almost a year into an ambitious effort to create an organizational structure that supports students and delivers timely services. These new, guided pathways will help create the right conditions for our diversity of learners rather than attempt to fit them into a one-size-fits-all structure.

The Guided Pathways reforms focus on providing students with a highly personalized and structured experience that informs sound decision-making. This concept provides clear academic program roadmaps; an onboarding process that clarifies student goals and career direction; fosters a developmental education culture more closely aligned with student goals; and provides intentional advising, coupled with progress tracking, and individually-designed support.

Last fall, following a highly competitive national selection process, Community College of Philadelphia was invited to join in the Pathways Project, a groundbreaking initiative led by the American Association of Community Colleges. This initiative reinforces the College's ongoing effort to create a holistic educational approach that develops

guided pathways from the student's initial contact with the College through graduation.

AACC is coordinating the national partnership to build capacity for community colleges to implement a pathways approach to student success and college completion.

Partners include Achieving the Dream, Inc., the Aspen Institute, the Center for Community College Student Engagement, the Community College Research Center, Jobs for the Future, the National Center for Inquiry and Improvement, and Public Agenda. Partners have participated actively in the college selection process, and also are substantially involved in designing a national model for community colleges. The project is funded through a \$5.2 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Over the past few years, as campus security and safety has emerged here and nationwide as a pressing concern; we have made upgrades and improvements that meet these ever-changing security challenges. While we are devoting more resources to this and meet these 21st century challenges, the list of urgent deferred maintenance and security projects continues to grow.

Our proposal for a \$3.6 million increase is reasonable, and it is my hope that you will support this important request.

Attached you will find charts that highlight our commitment to economic opportunity and diversity representative employment.

Thank you.