
Public Hearing

before

ASSEMBLY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

“The Committee will hold three public hearings on higher education reform.

The issues to be discussed at the hearings will include, but not be limited to, higher education affordability, accountability, college readiness, degree attainment, graduation rates, remedial instruction, dual enrollment, and reverse transfer agreements”

LOCATION: Rowan University
Glassboro, New Jersey

DATE: May 28, 2014
10:30 a.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Celeste M. Riley, Chair
Assemblyman Joseph Cryan
Assemblyman Paul D. Moriarty
Assemblywoman Gabriela M. Mosquera
Assemblywoman Nancy J. Pinkin
Assemblyman Samuel L. Fiocchi



ALSO PRESENT:

Adrian G. Crook
Office of Legislative Services
Committee Aide

Keith White
Assembly Majority
Committee Aide

Kevin Nedza
Assembly Republican
Committee Aide

Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by
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Hearing Unit, State House Annex, PO 068, Trenton, New Jersey

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New Jersey State Legislature
ASSEMBLY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE
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PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Assembly Higher Education Committee will hold three public hearings on higher education reform. The issues to be discussed at the hearings will include, but not be limited to, higher education affordability, accountability, college readiness, degree attainment, graduation rates, remedial instruction, dual enrollment, and reverse transfer agreements.

The hearings will be held at the following places at the dates and times listed:

Wednesday, May 14, 2014
10:30 AM

The College of New Jersey
School of Education Building, Room 212
2000 Pennington Road
Ewing, New Jersey 08628

Wednesday, May 28, 2014
10:30 AM

Rowan University
Room 3091
James Hall, College of Education
North Campus Drive
Glassboro, New Jersey 08028

Wednesday, June 11, 2014
10:30 AM

Hudson County Community College
Culinary Conference Center
Scott Ring Room, 2nd Floor
161 Newkirk Street
Jersey City, New Jersey 07306

The public may address comments and questions to Adrian G. Crook, Committee Aide, or make bill status and scheduling inquiries to Larkin Cugnitti, Secretary, Marguerite Tazza, Secretary, or Julia A. Love, Secretary, at (609)847-3850, fax (609)984-9808, or e-mail: OLS Aide.AHI@njleg.org. Written and electronic comments, questions and testimony submitted to the committee by the public, as well as recordings and transcripts, if any, of oral testimony, are government records and will be available to the public upon request.

Persons wishing to testify should call (609) 847-3850. The committee requests that the oral presentation be limited to five minutes. All persons who are testifying should submit 15 written copies of their testimony the day of the public hearing. Persons who are not presenting oral testimony may submit 15 copies of written testimony for consideration by the committee and inclusion in the record.

Issued 5/9/14

For reasonable accommodation of a disability call the telephone number or fax number above, or TTY for persons with hearing loss 609-777-2744 (toll free in NJ) 800-257-7490. The provision of assistive listening devices requires 24 hours' notice. Real time reporter or sign language interpretation requires 5 days' notice.

For changes in schedule due to snow or other emergencies, call 800-792-8630 (toll-free in NJ) or 609-292-4840.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Ali A. Houshmand, Ph.D. President Rowan University	2
Tim Haresign, Ph.D. President Council of New Jersey State College Locals	41
Lawrence A. Nespoli, D.Ed. President New Jersey Council of County Colleges	55
Raymond A. Yannuzzi, Ph.D. President Camden City College	56
Jalina Wayser NJHELP Campaign Manager New Jersey United Students	78
Joyce Marquez Representing New Jersey United Students	78
Edgar Trinidad Representing New Jersey United Students, and St. Joseph DREAMers	81
Oliver Goushian Diversity Coordinator New Jersey United Students	90
Hanna Rothenberg Secretary New Jersey United Students	91

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Rachel Storch President New Jersey United Students	94
Timothy Kyle Community and Labor Liaison New Jersey United Students	98
Ephraim Hussain Representing New Jersey United Students	101
Alex Uematsu Chair Legislative and Governmental Affairs New Jersey United Students	103
Justin Habler Policy Advisor New Jersey United Students	105
APPENDIX:	
Testimony submitted by Tim Haresign, Ph.D.	1x
Testimony submitted by Raymond A. Yannuzzi, Ph.D.	8x
Fact sheet submitted by New Jersey United Students	13x
pnf: 1-108	

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CELESTE M. RILEY (Chair): Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the Assembly Higher Education Committee hearing on college affordability and remediation.

I want to first thank Rowan University for allowing us to have the hearing on campus. For me, it's wonderful; I'm a South Jersey girl, coming from Cumberland County.

I have visiting members on the Committee today: Assemblyman Paul Moriarty from Washington Township; Assemblywoman Gabriela Mosquera from Deptford.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MOSQUERA: Gloucester Township.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Gloucester, I apologize.
(laughter)

I have Assemblyman Sam Fiocchi from Vineland; and Assemblyman Joe Cryan from -- and travelling the farthest -- from--

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Union.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Union, thank you. Thank you.

We're going to talk about the 20-bill initiative that was submitted -- that has come out of the Assembly a few months ago. It is the number one issue that I felt we, as a Committee, should partake in the conversation of college affordability. But it's also about college remediation and what are we doing to make college students successful. If you're paying for a college education, what are we doing? How are we getting that college student through school and into the workforce? So it's also about workforce readiness.

I'm going to have President Ali Houshmand speak first. I thank you very much for coming up and, again, allowing this Committee to have the hearing here today.

Good morning, Dr. Houshmand.

ALI A. HOUSHMAND, Ph.D.: Good morning.

Good morning, everybody. Madam Chairman and members of the Committee, and the members of the audience, welcome to Rowan University. I'm so delighted that you could make time in your very busy schedules to come and see our beautiful and evolving campus.

I have a written statement here; I'm not going to read the whole thing. I'm just going to read one paragraph and, really, I want you to throw all the tough questions at me. I'd rather get to that point.

But what I wanted to tell you is where we are and where we are going as a result of the Restructuring Act -- that I'm so grateful for your effort for. Rowan has evolved substantially. If you look at the statistics of this university over the past seven years, we went from somewhere in the neighborhood of 9,000 students to currently 13,500 students, and growing every year -- somewhere in the neighborhood between 250 to 500 students per year -- with the goal of eventually, in 10 years, reaching 25,000 students.

Our research has quadrupled already, as a result of the restructuring, in a space of one year; and our goal is to reach \$100 million research in 10 years. We started with almost nothing when I came in here seven years ago.

The operating budget when I came in here was about \$150 million to \$160 million. Currently it is about just under half a billion; our goal is, in 10 years, a \$1 billion operating budget.

Our endowment is in the neighborhood of around \$170 million; our goal is to reach half a billion dollars.

And how do we do that? We do all of these things because the future of this university -- we're going to build it on four fundamental pillars, which is really the subject of all the discussions and, if you read the 20 bills, it is the subject of the bills as well. It's a national debate. I would say, quite honestly, in today's America, higher education and how you fix the challenges that we face is strategically important to the future of this country; it really is. It's far more important than any military challenge that this country faces.

Because one of the areas that we need to be very, very careful about is the issue of cyber security. Imagine if one day you wake up and you go to your bank and you cannot draw your own money because it's been hacked by, God knows -- somewhere far away from here. And these are the challenges that we are facing right now. And therefore, the future of the country rests with as many people achieving higher education as possible, because the bachelor's degrees of today is the high school diploma of 20 years ago. It's no longer a luxury, it's a necessity. You must have it.

Let me throw some numbers at you, some statistics at you that frightens us. If you look at, currently, the population of Americans between the ages of 24 to 35, as well as the population of Americans between the ages of 44 to 55, you will find in the latter population -- 44 to 55 -- America is number one in the world in terms of percentage of that population with

baccalaureate degrees. If you look at the population of 24 to 35, America is number seven in terms of the population percentage of people with baccalaureate degrees.

What does that tell you? That tells you in one generation this country has lost 7 positions. And, in the meantime, a country like China -- that seven years ago was a reasonable economy -- is now taking over as the number one economy in the world.

So the issue, as you can see, is strategic, and it's not something that you can just do incremental changes; it's time for fundamental change.

So what are we doing here trying to respond to all the challenges? As I said, the future of this university rests with always looking at the four pillars that are very important to us.

And what are these four pillars? Access to education. We believe every single American citizen deserves a quality education.

Number two is affordability. We have to stop this nonsense of balancing the budget of our education on the backs of our students or taxpayers. There are different ways and we have to find them.

Number three is the quality of education. We need to make sure that this country trains and produces the best and brightest; because this is a knowledge economy, and the more bright, and capable, and knowledgeable workforce you have, the better economy you have, the better position you have in this world.

And number four -- very, very important for State institutions, especially -- where we are, not only does Rowan matter, but the surrounding community matters. We need to act as an economic engine to lift the rest of the community as we evolve and grow. We cannot do that in isolation;

we cannot allow the rest of the towns and the cities here to remain where they are while we grow. Therefore, we need to-- As a major employer, we need to become a major contributor in terms of economic development.

And in all of these areas I'm very proud to say that Rowan is very ahead and has done tremendously. And I want to give you some statistics.

When it comes to the issue of access, as I said, nine years ago I came in here, we had a total of 8,000 or so applicants. We just closed our applications; this year we had 25,000 applicants for this university. That's growth. We went from 9,000 students to 13,500 with a goal of 25,000. Why are we thinking that access is important? Let's look at where we are. We are in southern New Jersey. If you look at the eight counties of southern New Jersey, we are about a population of 2.5 million -- which makes up about 30 percent of the population of the State of New Jersey. But when you look at the total number of seats that we have here, if you are very, very conservative and generous, there are only 25,000 undergraduate seats between four institutions in South Jersey: Rutgers-Camden, Stockton, Rowan, and Georgian Court. That says that 2.5 million population, 25,000 at most undergraduate -- the ratio is 100 to 1, in terms of the number of citizens for which there is one undergraduate seat. For every 100 American citizens there is 1 undergraduate seat in South New Jersey. The national average is 30 to 1; in North Jersey it is 30 to 1. You cannot have a region this important, this populated, not having the workforce. Because when you don't have it companies will not come in here, jobs are not created here, and people lead a lower standard of life. Education pays -- that is important.

So access is very important to us because we are in this region. It is our duty to provide as many seats as possible -- high quality seats for our students. That's why we're growing in the area of access.

In the area of quality, it is absolutely essential that in this university and in every other university we provide the highest quality education always, no matter what. Therefore, as far as I'm concerned, my mandate has been no matter how much is cut, no matter how much shortage in the budget we will have, we will never cut academic effort. That is a no-no. To prove that, this year we have 64 new faculty members hired, whereas if you move -- go back 20 years past, Rowan never hired more than 20 faculty per year. And why do we do that? We bring qualified, highly credentialed faculty members in here because the quality of education matters.

When it comes to affordability -- that is very important. We have fundamentally changed our posture in that we no longer manage the revenue side of our ledger. We now manage the expense side of our ledger. In other words, we do not wait until the last moment to see how short we are and then decide how much we are going to increase the tuition and fees. We have made the commitment, I have made the commitment, that as long as I'm the President, the tuition and fees of this university will not move beyond the rate of inflation, no matter what.

This year our tuition and fees are going to be increased by 1.9 percent. This past year it was 0 percent. The average over the past three years has been 1.63 percent. This has been responsible; this is not balancing our budget on the backs of the students. So that is an issue of the cost and affordability.

In terms of acting as an economic engine, we have made the decision that when it comes to building the infrastructure, the facilities -- it is public/private partnership all the way, no matter what. If you go to Rowan Boulevard you will see a \$300 million project that is building academic buildings, bookstore, hotel, dorms, and also some other facilities. And the impact of that project is that more jobs are being created, the property values of this region is increasing, and everybody is better off as a result of us participating and partnering with our community to lift them up.

Therefore, the issues to me in higher education are how are we to -- as responsible leaders -- tackle these very four important issues which are directly related to the 20 bills that you are talking about.

How do we deal with access, how do we deal with affordability, and how do we deal with quality of education to make sure that our students do not become victims to some for-profits whose aim is only to make money? And how do we be an economic engine?

So that's what I wanted to tell you about Rowan, and to stop here and answer any questions that you have. Because I could read this on, and on, and on and just waste everybody's time.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Thank you very much for your testimony.

You always have so much information. But let's get back to-- And I commend you for what you've done in the last seven years. It is absolutely -- just witnessing myself, it's been extraordinary and it's been heartwarming to watch it because -- knowing full well that South Jersey has

been in a downward spiral. I feel that Rowan is actually bringing us back up, and I thank you for that.

DR. HOUSHMAND: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: And some strategic changes that have happened in restructuring higher education also.

DR. HOUSHMAND: Of course.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Having two medical schools down here, and then Cooper, I mean-- There is some very extraordinary things that have happened that actually have placed South Jersey on the map.

DR. HOUSHMAND: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: And so it gives us the ability to grow.

But you're absolutely right about the workforce, and the issue of losing students to other states because of not being able to grow them here educationally. They're looking at opportunities outside of the State of New Jersey. And you know that this was one of our number one issues that we've spoken -- you and I have spoken about.

DR. HOUSHMAND: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: So on your four pillars, you are concentrating on access -- and I appreciate that -- but let's go to affordability.

DR. HOUSHMAND: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Because in one of our bills in our package, we have a tuition freeze bill. And I would like you to speak to that, because we had a brief conversation with Assemblyman Cryan, and

you had explained that it is a possibility -- that you could do that -- a tuition freeze. Can you explain that how you saw it?

DR. HOUSHMAND: There are a number of ways that you could do a tuition-- Let me explain the current state, and then let's talk about some possible solutions.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Okay.

DR. HOUSHMAND: Currently at this university, students classified as full-time -- if a student takes anywhere from 12 to 17 credit hours, they all pay the same amount.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Okay.

DR. HOUSHMAND: If you get deep into that and examine it, you will find, chances are, the kids who are taking less and less credits are economically worse off than the kids who take more and more credits. So what is happening, as a result of our formula, the less fortunate kids are subsidizing other students -- because they take 12 credit hours and are full-time, and they pay the full tuition and fees like a kid who takes 17 credits. And I believe that it's time for us to charge people for what they take.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Okay.

DR. HOUSHMAND: If you take 10 credits, pay for 10; if you take 15, pay for 15.

But let me alert you to some statistics that came to me recently. I asked my research office to provide me the list of every student who just walked this past May -- last week -- and graduated. And I wanted to know, of each and every single one of them, how many credits they attempted, how many credits they earned. Because chances are, you take a course and you fail it -- that is not earning credit, you have to repeat that.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Okay.

DR. HOUSHMAND: So there is usually -- chances are that a student attempts more credit than they earn credit.

And to my shock, I found close to 70 percent on the list that I had, had more than 120 credits.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Oh, wow.

DR. HOUSHMAND: In fact, let me show you some of them.

One student had attempted 326 credits; the next one is 295; 287; 289; 280; 275. This is for 120-credit degrees.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Is this for a bachelor's degree?

DR. HOUSHMAND: Yes, yes.

Now, something even more surprising-- This happened-- We did a study; we went and looked at, from the year 2006 to 2012, we looked at how many students entered Rowan University and left without getting a degree. That number we found to be exactly 2,615 of them. Of those, here is the breakdown: 600 of them had accrued between 60 to 74 credits and then left; 625 of them accrued between 75 and 89, left; 450 of them between 90 to 104 credits; 385 of them between 105 to 199 credits; and this is the shocker -- 555 of them had accrued between 120 and 224 credits but never got a degree.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Oh, my God.

DR. HOUSHMAND: The question is, why?

These people probably left with \$30,000 to \$40,000 debt. They are out there and they have no degrees. So what I have done -- what I am so proud of our people -- we are contacting every single one of these kids, get these people and say, "Come back. We will make it convenient for you;

we will give you as much discount as possible so that you can finish your degree.” Because chances are, one of them is short one course somewhere, or another course someplace else. And if they take it, they get their degrees.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: That’s commendable. This is something that we spoke about with the reverse transfer.

DR. HOUSHMAND: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: And those students that are close to even an associate’s degree-- Now that you’re associated with Gloucester, can you give them some form of--

DR. HOUSHMAND: Absolutely. We already signed that reverse transfer. We have 2,615 candidates for associate degrees immediately, and 555 candidates for a bachelor’s degree almost immediately.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Wow.

DR. HOUSHMAND: These are the people who left without a degree.

But Madam Chair, here is the bigger issue -- because I said that this is a national issue. This is no longer dealing with an isolated problem in here. This truly is a strategic and national issue. The six-year graduation rate currently in this country stands at 58 percent for a four-year degree. That means any which way you cut it, at the end of six years -- because once you get to seventh year, people drop out; very few people graduate after that. There are 40 percent of Americans -- that, if you sit down and do the numbers, accounts to close to 30 million people in this category out there; 30 million. If President Obama wants us to become number one in the world with baccalaureate degrees, there are 30 million people out there -

- go catch them. Go figure out a way to bring them back and make it convenient, provide grants, and get them their degrees. Use the online; allow them to do transfer. Let them go to a county college someplace and take that course; they don't have to come here. If you do that, you have done the greatest impact in the lives of millions of Americans.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: We totally agree with you. So if you have 2,000 students right there on your list statewide, I'm assuming, and--

DR. HOUSHMAND: For only a period of six years.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Exactly. So could we-- This is an initiative that we were discussing about doing statewide. Is this something that you think that, as policy, that as a State we should be doing?

DR. HOUSHMAND: I think that, as many of these ideas that we are putting here, number one, are scalable, and they are expandable, you could build it in here as a model and go and implement it someplace else, and someplace else. Because chances are -- and I don't know, I don't know the statistics of other institutions -- but I'll bet you you're not going to find much difference than here.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Wonderful.

DR. HOUSHMAND: And here is one reason. I wanted to say that -- and I apologize to some individuals who may take it the wrong way. The fact of the matter is that our education is a segment that was built during the agrarian age and it hasn't changed one bit. It's the state behaving the same way while the world is moving so fast. And we in the higher education segment always believed the fault lies someplace else -- in

other words, if a student takes 320 credit courses and doesn't graduate, it's the student's fault. I don't believe so. I think it's the collective fault of all of us. I think it comes in the way that we advise them; in the way that we sequence courses; in the way that we bring the students and give them remedial courses; in the way that we bring heterogeneous students into a system and put them all into a classroom, and get them all confused by the instructor who is trying to teach -- whether to teach to the high end or the low end. So there are a whole host of issues that needs to be looked at. These are not the issues that you can just have one hearing and resolve. But they are fundamental, they are strategic, and they really require a strategic approach.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Well then, a strategic approach -- would you recommend that we have some form of a coordination of a task force?

DR. HOUSHMAND: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Okay.

DR. HOUSHMAND: I absolutely believe that. I really believe that-- Let me tell you, my colleagues -- and I've talked to them -- my colleagues care just as much. They want to do the right thing. They really, genuinely would like to do the right thing. They want to be a part of this solution, and I'm speaking on behalf of all the presidents that I know at the State institutions. The question is how do we bring them around the table, form a group that consists of industry people, legislators, thought leaders in the country -- academicians, presidents and faculty members, parents, and students -- to sit down and seriously look at ways in which each of us have to do our share and our part in order to fix it.

It will be a long solution, though. If one segment of this group comes and says, "I am perfect; the rest of you have to fix it" --that's where the problem is right now. There is a group of us, in our segment, who think that the fault is not with them -- they are perfect. And I don't believe that's the case.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Interesting.

Before I move forward, does anyone have any questions concerning anything that we've spoken about? Any questions from the Committee?

Assemblyman Cryan.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: How are you?

Good morning, everybody; good morning. It's always a pleasure, thank you; and thank you for having me here before on this wonderful campus with such an exciting future. It's really an honor to be here.

If I could just figure out how to get out of Elizabeth on time, I would be all right. (laughter) I apologize.

I want to explore the 2,615 a little more, and then I wanted to ask you some other questions in terms of the bills that we have. And I thank you, as always, for your perspective.

So I was trying to write as you spoke, so I apologize. Six-year profile, 2,615 students left the university, total?

DR. HOUSHMAND: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I have to ask you -- the first question which you touched upon -- is how do 555 students with 120 credits leave? Why doesn't some academic--

DR. HOUSHMAND: It's not 120 -- it's between 120 and 224.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Right, right. But 555 students--

DR. HOUSHMAND: Enough for two degrees.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I mean, I have-- Now, you and I have chatted about this a little bit along with Assemblywoman Riley. The fundamental question here goes to the supports needed to graduate.

DR. HOUSHMAND: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: There are studies that show that if you provide the supports that you mentioned, and the increase in faculty, that students can, in fact, graduate.

DR. HOUSHMAND: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I mean, the number kind of blows me away, because there are 555 people who, in theory, had academic advisors, guidance counselors -- and you opened with the fact that you won't cut that area -- who didn't graduate.

DR. HOUSHMAND: Here is what happened. Let me give you a scenario.

A student comes in and wants to be finance major. Goes to the Department of Finance, takes the courses and, at the end of the semester, for whatever reason, decides to change majors and go into history. So while he was a finance major, his advisor in finance says, "You take this course, this course, this course, and this course," and the kid took them, either liked them, didn't like them, failed them, passed them, whatever -- and then decided to switch and goes to history. The history advisor comes, and the history advisor most likely knows the history curriculum but doesn't know the finance curriculum. And she says, "Okay, now you need to take this

course, that course, this course, and that course.” And he does the same thing, and again keeps switching and changing majors, three or four times. And every time he goes to a different person, gets very different advice -- some of them are right, some of them are wrong. And as a result-- We don’t have a generic degree called, say, a *general studies degree* that mandates that as soon as you hit 120 credit hours, if you have enough freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior courses, here’s your general education degree. Get that and let’s worry about your major afterwards. I think that’s one thing that we would like to do soon.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: So that’s one thing we should look at, is an all-encompassing type of major.

DR. HOUSHMAND: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Which goes into-- And how would you recommend-- I’d love to pick your brain -- but how would you-- One of the bills, and I think it’s Assemblywoman Riley’s bills -- on the pathway to graduation that requires that there be a mandatory -- at 60 credits, I believe -- obligation with the guidance counselor, with academic supports as to how you achieve 120, how you get there, and preferably within the eight-semester curriculum. Could you just expand that thought of a bill, and these incredible statistics that you just showed us.

And then second to that -- I don’t want to ask too many on this at one time, but have to do it because we want to ask every other leader of a higher ed institution to provide us the same information.

DR. HOUSHMAND: Well, what you need to do is-- If you go across the country, in every institution you will find that typically a student enters the university -- for the first two years, more or less, they’re dealing

with what we call *general education*. And from institution to institution there are 7,000 of us. If you go and find out, chances are you'll find each of us has something unique about the way we define general education. And I think everybody -- every citizen in this country knows that a typical student who goes to school needs to understand American history, needs to know a little bit about psychology, philosophy, history, English language, communication, speech -- there are a number of courses that we all believe that are essential for everybody to have. But the definition of general education differs from one university to another, and sometimes from one department to another. And that has created a massive, massive system called *general education* that we cannot control. If you go to those institutions where they have a good handle over the general education, and they have defined them, and they have streamlined them, and reduced them so that they are a very clearly defined, lock-step, type of curriculum-- If you can get people through the two years with a well-defined general education so that people can be moved from one set of courses to another -- if you can control the first two years, this will be a huge, huge help.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Is the Common Core numbering system -- which is another one of the bills here; I forget who sponsors it, I think it's Assemblywoman Riley -- is that the kind of bill that would help support this type of effort?

DR. HOUSHMAND: Well, I really believe it's important that you have individuals from the academic side to be part of the debate to formulate and finalize that bill. It's very important, because we want to make sure that we do not mandate wrong courses on behalf of the educators.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: So is your counsel on that bill, to the folks with microphones in front of them, that you take the best and the brightest of the higher ed institutions and let those folks go do the Common Core standards?

DR. HOUSHMAND: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: And get out of their way, for lack of a better way of putting it?

DR. HOUSHMAND: Yes, yes. And then define it.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: We're Legislators; we don't really get out of the way all that much.

DR. HOUSHMAND: But then you can't be Legislators. You know, you let the experts decide, and you legislate it.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: No, no, I'm with you, I get you.

DR. HOUSHMAND: I can assure you, if I controlled the general education it would be a massive boost to our institution in terms of reduction in costs.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Would that also help us -- and I know you're answering one, and I've interrupted -- would that also help us with the idea of the partnership with the county colleges -- which I know you didn't touch upon, but you have a unique partnership here.

DR. HOUSHMAND: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: It would help us in that regard as well?

DR. HOUSHMAND: It's huge. Assemblyman Cryan, let me tell you, in my view we need to get away from this nonsense of elitism and looking down at county colleges. County colleges are a very, very important

sector of higher education in this country. They were built on the back of taxpayers, they have capacity, their instructors teach, they care for teaching, and the price is a hell of a lot less expensive; it's one-fifth of what we charge. In my view, given the economy-- And here is a statistic. Let me read this thing for you so you can appreciate how important the county college can become. It says, "Just 39 percent of the 12th grade students have the mathematic skills and 38 percent of the reading skills needed for entry level college courses, according to the results on the National Assessment of Educational Program." That tells you 60 percent of the kids who are currently coming out of high school really are not ready to be put in four-year institutions and pay tons of money -- borrow tons of money -- in order to get through the first two years. In my view, many of the county colleges can do a far better job at far less expense and cost, and these people can then transfer to a four-year degree.

I believe that the role of county colleges should never be dismissed; they are very important. And I really-- I think the relationship that we have started with Gloucester County College, I consider it to be bold and revolutionary; I think we are now giving access-- Basically what we are doing, we are putting the burden on the students. We are saying, "You want to get a Rowan degree? Come on in. I don't care what your score is, but you better prove it to me. I'm not going to lower my standards. I'm going to expect excellence from you. But if you want to come in here, go to county college if you're not accepted to our program directly. Take your two years; either stay there (indiscernible) come and teach you the rest of it, or transfer in here and get a degree in here. But in

doing so, you reduce the cost of your tuition for a degree by 40 percent immediately -- 40 percent.”

So my recommendation is: pay particular attention to our county colleges. Let’s just highlight that. Take a look at the seven county colleges in South Jersey: Ocean, Atlantic/Cape May, Cumberland, Salem, Gloucester, Camden, and Burlington. Between five of them they have 55,000 students. Guess what? The total number of seats that we are currently short in southern New Jersey is about 55,000.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: To get from 1 in a 100 to 1 in 30.

DR. HOUSHMAND: That’s right. Now, imagine if I could get that entire army to finish their associate degree and, through the relationship that we just created with Gloucester -- a similar relationship with other institutions, not necessarily with Rowan -- get these people into the baccalaureate degrees. You reduce the costs, you respond to access, you get the workforce that is trained in this region similar to the rest of the country -- all of it through one action. That’s how important the county colleges are.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Can I interrupt on that?

So what you’re saying is -- so they are going to go to the two-year college for the associates degree, and possibly then a four-year degree on the two-year college campus -- at the two-year college campus, or transfer-- Just the way that they’re doing it with other--

DR. HOUSHMAND: Both -- we have, right now, both. We either go to Gloucester or Gloucester comes here.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Okay.

DR. HOUSHMAND: I mean, it's doing transfer here. In fact, we are talking to them -- for Gloucester (*sic*) to come here as well. Because we can-- This is another thing. We can actually have, through public/private partnerships, residential county colleges. Think about a student who wants to have campus experience, wants to be at Rowan but is not really admissible, based on credentials. Suppose that a consortium of the county colleges comes to Rowan Boulevard, works with a developer, builds a dorm at their expense, and then the students who we say, "You're not accepted to us; go through this consortium, live on our campus, have a campus experience, except pay one-fifth of the tuition and fees" -- have a dorm, and then seamlessly -- we say that you can get a degree after two years. So you could have it all three models; but it doesn't have to be two years plus two years. This issue has to be seamless so that the parent says, "My kid is going to pursue a Rowan degree. My kid is going to pursue a Montclair degree," rather than, "My kid is going to a county college and then we'll see what happens after two years."

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Got it, got it. I understand.

Assemblyman Moriarty, you had a question?

ASSEMBLYMAN MORIARTY: I don't know; is he finished?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Oh, I'm sorry. Were you finished?

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I had a few more, but go ahead. I'll wait.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Well, I'll come back to you, I apologize.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: No, that's all right. Please.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: No, go.

ASSEMBLYMAN MORIARTY: Thank you, Mr. President. Always good to see you and pick your brain. Great things are happening at Rowan under your leadership, and I thank you.

I just have a few questions.

I wanted to ask you about, when it comes to affordability and access, what is the future role of the Internet, and why aren't we able to provide education to some people through the Internet, at a lower cost, and be able to provide more access to those students who don't have an actual seat?

DR. HOUSHMAND: This is a transition period. We suddenly -- in a space of, I would say, 10 years we have moved light years when it comes to the advancement in technology. And as a result, some of us are slower than others. If you really look at it today, the 17-year-olds who come into this college -- or any college -- should actually teach some of the professors about technology. They know more about technology than we do, because they grew up in it. It is not that the rest of us are not smart enough, it's just that they grew up with it and it's easier.

I think technology has a huge role to play. It is showing its ugly face in everything that we do, whether it is the car that we drive, or the washing machine that we operate, or the coffee machine that we operate. Everything has technology. And I think we need to be realistic and recognize there is tremendous amount of viability in the Internet.

And we have done that. Let's see what we did. We just partnered with Richard Stockton and we created two MOOCs, two courses -- one them, one us; six-credit. We are making these two courses available

to every high school kid in the State of New Jersey for free. And if they get a good grade, and they choose to come in here, we give them transfer. So that means that a kid can come here already with six credits in their pocket. That makes their freshman load lighter, that makes the chance of them retaining their first year substantially more, and that means that the chance to get a degree increases substantially.

Now, why can't this program be instituted throughout the state? Why can't each institution have just one course? Imagine that. And make it available to everybody, and let it be transferrable. So Stockton right now will accept our credit and we accept theirs. And let the student choose to go where they want.

ASSEMBLYMAN MORIARTY: Do you see in the future, or should we be looking at in the future, the ability for students to take a good percentage of their courses at a lesser cost off campus?

DR. HOUSHMAND: It depends on the major. Some majors are more attuned to technology than some others. There are certain courses -- it's really much more challenging. I'm not saying it is impossible, because we're evolving. We are doing things right now -- I urge you to go to our Tech Park and look at our CAVE. And you will see we have got an X-ray of a patient that, when you go in there and look at a 3-D dimension, like EPCOT Center, it's as if you can fly through the human body and you can also do some anatomy by looking at this thing in 3 dimensions. Put your goggles on and you're in EPCOT Center. That's what you see. So technology is advancing very, very fast.

But nevertheless, there are certain courses that I really believe it's not that easy, that's number one. Number two, I really believe the

notion of kids leaving home and going to college to grow, and to prosper, and to become productive citizens is a cultural issue that is important and valued. Therefore, complete replacement of a four-year experience or an experience on campus with technology, in my opinion, is not wise. I think technology today is more relevant to what I call *nontraditional students*. Nevertheless, I really believe that even in all universities we need to have a certain blend of courses that are only taught online.

Here's an example of why it is good. This past winter we had the most terrible winter; we had to close this campus four or five days. And sometimes the courses that are meeting in the evenings are of 3-hour duration; every time you miss one session you miss one-fifteenth of the whole course. Now, I proposed to some people a few years back, let us all learn how to use technology and teach online. For the eventualities that the weather is bad or, God forbid, there is a shooting on campus and you have to close the campus for a whole week, what are you going to do when you do that? If all of us have access to the Internet and we know how to teach online, during that one week when the weather is bad or the campus is closed we can continue doing our business, connecting with our students, teaching rather than wasting everybody's time.

So there are so many reasons why we want to do that, but I do not believe that Internet and online education is a full replacement for face-to-face. There are areas that are very much doable; there are areas that are not. And initially, investment for online education is not less expensive, it's more expensive. But the long-term benefit is huge in terms of accessibility and reaching a large number of people.

ASSEMBLYMAN MORIARTY: Thank you.

One other question. When talking about all of these students who have a good amount of credits or even more credits than they need to graduate -- and Assemblyman Cryan touched on this as well -- it gets back to the student advisors. Is there an element of reform that maybe needs to be done in terms of how student advising is done on campus? Has that evolved?

DR. HOUSHMAND: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN MORIARTY: Do we need to evolve it even more to make student advisors responsible for getting the students they are responsible for -- to get them through that four years, or five years, or six years?

DR. HOUSHMAND: Yes. I think there are some fine professional advisors who are very good at that. What we have decided to do in this university, exactly in response to that issue, is we have created a centralized advising consisting of individuals who are professional advisors and they know the entire curriculum of every major. That's essential, because if you leave it to a faculty member, as good intentioned as faculty are, a particular faculty in one major -- let's say electrical engineering -- at best knows his curriculum. He would not be able to advise a student about a history major or a geography major. Therefore, professional advisors should be advising; faculty need to do mentorship. That's really where the difference is. You cannot expect a faculty member to advise 400 or 500 students, and at the same time take a teaching load that is full-time and serve on committees. Something will fall through the cracks. And I really believe that we have figured this out and we are moving in this direction. We are trying to create a centralized advising where every student is

required to meet professional advisors on a semester-by-semester basis so that they can get the right advice. That's one thing.

The other thing is that this plus streamlining the general education, making it a lock-step type of a curriculum, will solve all these issues. But advising alone will not.

ASSEMBLYMAN MORIARTY: Thank you, Mr. President.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Assemblyman Cryan, did you have any finishing questions?

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Yes, I had a couple of follow-ups, if that's all right, on some of the parts of the Bill.

And thanks again for those comments.

I want to explore the tuition and fee freeze bill with you some more. By the way, Rowan -- if you haven't-- Hopefully, you have a better life than I do and you haven't done all this stuff -- but Rowan's tuition and fee increases over the past six years are about 50 percent less than most of the higher ed schools. You talked about managing the expenses and you talked about one particular area -- the idea that we should no longer go to, I guess, block charging or block tuition costs. I'd like you to expand upon that a little bit. And also is-- Candidly, we have heard differing views on whether a tuition and fee freeze bill -- one that would provide the cost to a family -- the same cost for four years-- In our case, right now, the proposal is for nine semesters, with the idea being twofold: one is to incentivize the student to finish, and one is, obviously, for the university to have, perhaps, even more incentive for a student to finish as well.

I was hopeful you could expand upon that cost profile that you talked about and give us your thoughts on that bill.

DR. HOUSHMAND: There are models out there called the *step up system*. The step up system says you come to a school as a freshman, and we will tell you that your tuition and fees are fixed for the duration of four years that you are here -- whatever that price is; so flat, you know it. In fact, so much so -- and we did that at Drexel. We could literally give a bill to the parent and say, "Here is your total package of a degree cost: room and board, books, incidentals, tuition, and fees; here it is." You know that you are obligated to -- I don't know, \$150,000 for the four years, whatever the number is. That was a private school. And then what we did -- so every freshman class came in and they knew what their tuition was and it was fixed throughout for the duration -- four years. And then the next cohort that came in stepped up and then the same thing happened. The next cohort came in and stepped up, and the same thing happened. This is a model that a number of the universities employ; it's doable. It is not actually negatively consequential to people. It really is not. Let me tell you, Assemblyman, today if I actually give people scholarships based on performance -- *delay their scholarship*, I call it. In that, a student comes in and doesn't have the SAT or high school GPA to get a scholarship. If I tell that kid that, "Look, if you perform 3.5 or higher in the first year, for next year I'm going to give you so much scholarship." In other words, give them a prize rather than a gift -- prize on a performance. If I do that, it enhances my graduation rate, and actually financially we would be better off because I would create more capacity. As soon as I can get a kid out of the school I can bring someone in to replace them, I am better off. I'm not financially worse off, actually. I'll take that any day.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Okay. All right, thank you for that. And that also enhances when you have 1 in 100, never mind the county college opportunity. By turnover you can do better. We heard that from the President of TCNJ the other day as well.

Because I don't want to hog this entire thing, I did want to just ask -- textbooks. And there are students behind you who enjoy the value of a good textbook and appreciate the reasonable prices that they are at all times, right? I see a lot of smiles behind you and some heads nodding.
(laughter)

DR. HOUSHMAND: I know, I know.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Okay. We have had an opportunity to chat and, again I need to thank you for your willingness to talk about these issues with us.

Licensing is a big deal, and there are complexities with bookstores. It's not as simple as buying one or mandating it back. We really want to have this discussion, because for some folks we've heard around this state it's the breaking point. The *Star-Ledger* doesn't think so, but families, I can tell you, in the 20th District think so, and I'm sure around the state as well.

Could you talk to us about-- I mean, one of the ideas that's been bandied about, and I think in our discussion I really would like you to expand upon it, is the idea of maybe doing an online pilot -- iPad, whatever that technology is -- for those of us who were smart enough not to forget their iPads today. Could you talk about that a little bit in terms of what opportunities we could look at, or where you would advise or counsel the Committee as to what may be out there?

DR. HOUSHMAND: There is a tremendous amount of technology out there right now that you really-- If you employ them, you could literally make a hardcover textbook obsolete. And textbooks are expensive. Not only are they expensive, they are outrageously expensive in the way that they are being sold. I have taught -- I have taught mathematics and calculus all my previous life. You go out and buy a calculus textbook, which is this thick (indicating), and then you buy the supporting booklet -- the solution manual, the exercise manual, the instructor's manual. By the time you get the whole manual, I would say about 10 inches thick and it is about 20 pounds in weight, and you pay \$250. And you take your course, and if you use the first chapter of it -- the first 10 chapters of it, there are 20 more chapters you never touch. And that's the end of your calculus, whether you drop it or you don't want to take Calculus II, you go and sell that thing for one-fifth of what you paid for it. How many trees were killed, how many backs were broken, how much money you have paid is irrelevant. All of these things can easily now be put in an iPad that would cost you substantially less. And that's, Assemblyman Moriarty (*sic*), that's really the issue of technology. Why can't we, when the students come for the summer orientation -- every single one of them gets an iPad with all their books loaded in here, for exactly one semester and afterwards they go away, and pay \$15 for a book rather than \$200? Those costs are real costs. They really are, and they add up. And we never consider those; we say tuition and fees as if the rest of it is not important. They are very, very important. And therefore, there are ways in which to do that, and I am happy to say that we are working right now with Apple exactly for that kind of idea. In fact, we are looking at Apple for our

medical education, because one of the biggest challenges this State is going to face, and I dare say the country will face with the Obamacare -- that legislation will never in my view be successful unless we train an army of primary care physicians and nurse practitioners. This State alone, by the year 2020, is going to be short by 3,000 physicians, 2,000 of which are primary care physicians. Who's producing them? In this State right now we are producing many less doctors than this state needs. Unfortunately, many of them, when they graduate, they leave this state.

Therefore, how do you make sure that you have a sufficient number of trained individuals who have not accrued massive amounts of debt, who are willing to practice as a primary care physician, go to a rural area, provide affordable health care so that this legislation can be successful? Therefore, there are technologies out there, that Apple is building right now, where the entire lessons of medical education in the first two years are in an iPad. You could literally go in and give it to them. Everything that you want is in there.

So I am absolutely in favor of employing technology to the maximum extent. I believe an iPad for all -- for everybody would be great; and I urge you to help me find a little bit of seed money to actually implement it even this summer -- for a cohort, for a department, for a (indiscernible). Here are 50 students, you get your iPad -- it's a gift from a foundation, from the State, from anywhere -- and let's see how it works. I believe it works beautifully.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: And following up after the Committee, if you could give us an idea how much seed money that is. I'm sure there's an excitement here for that.

Last question, I promise.

Is it wrong, in your opinion, for the Legislature on behalf of the people of the State, to demand some accountability in terms of graduation rates as a performance indicator for higher ed universities?

DR. HOUSHMAND: If you were to go and buy a car from GM and they say to you, "I'll sell it for \$40,000. Drives it for 150,000 miles and if anything happens to it that is wrong you can come back and get your money back" -- you right now have that right, you can do that. But it is remarkable that we get a student who pays massive amounts of tuition and whatever we give them they take and they never complain. I think it's about time that we practice truth in advertising. A four-year degree means a four-year degree. It doesn't mean a five-year degree, it doesn't mean a six-year degree. It means a four-year degree. And I think it's about time for us to live up to what we commit. Because to me, when a parent -- think about this -- when a parent comes in the summer and brings their most precious asset to you, and says, "Here is my life. I give it to you. Turn them into a responsible taxpayer after four years" --and if you fail them, you fail the parents on their most precious asset. And that, to me, is not truth in advertising.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Thank you, Doctor. Thank you so, so much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Assemblyman Fiocchi, did you have a question?

ASSEMBLYMAN FIOCCHI: Just a comment and a brief question.

Chairwoman Riley, thank you for inviting me today. And Dr. Ali (*sic*), thank you for explaining things that even I can understand. So a very good job, and thank you for your stewardship.

And actually I want to go back, because actually my son's university had the four-year fixed tuition model. And that was really-- To me, that was great because you did know what was happening.

DR. HOUSHMAND: Exactly. You knew what your obligation was.

ASSEMBLYMAN FIOCCHI: You know, then, obviously, the next year the tuition goes up but it does not go up for the class with the frozen tuition.

But are there any numbers as far as how it affects your revenue, you know, moving forward?

DR. HOUSHMAND: I need to sit down and do the calculation.

ASSEMBLYMAN FIOCCHI: Okay.

DR. HOUSHMAND: I'm saying that I haven't done the numbers. I really would be surprised if it would have any negative impact on us. I do not believe that, especially given the posture that we have taken. We have already frozen-- We have already said that we are not going to go beyond the rate of inflation.

ASSEMBLYMAN FIOCCHI: Okay.

DR. HOUSHMAND: So let's assume that I do a step up and I say, "This year your tuition is this much; for the next class I'm going to increase it by 5 percent" -- which is equivalent to the rate of inflation over four years -- and then it stays there. So we can do that; it's doable. We just

need to sit down and look at the numbers. I do not believe it will have a massive impact negatively.

ASSEMBLYMAN FIOCCHI: And the only other thing I did want to mention is that I imagine that students are still using textbooks.

DR. HOUSHMAND: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN FIOCCHI: Actually, my old high school has gone all iPad now -- or tablet. It has to be a whole lot lighter load to be carrying around, so I certainly think it should be a great initiative.

DR. HOUSHMAND: It is.

ASSEMBLYMAN FIOCCHI: Again, thank you. Thank you, Doctor.

DR. HOUSHMAND: Sure.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Dr. Houshmand--

Oh, a question.

Assemblywoman Pinkin.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PINKIN: Yes, I appreciate your testimony, and I enjoyed hearing the data. I think data analysis is critical. So I think it would be great if we could have a copy of some of that data that you talked about, that you prepared for today.

But I had two questions. One is the issue of the data that you talked about for the students who are here for a very lengthy time -- for two, three times your credits. Do you have any analysis of their financial aid package -- who was paying for that? Was it-- Were any of those students on some program that someone else was paying for, rather than themselves? So was it their own debt, or was it on somebody else's--

DR. HOUSHMAND: A very good question. I can tell you what I have in front of me is the student-by-student amount of borrowing they did during their stay. And I am going to quote those to you, on average.

On average, our students -- this class that just graduated -- their average total debt was \$30,577.22. Now, you can break this down into two components: those who accrued more than 130 credits total, versus those who accrued less than or equal to 130. For those who accrued more than 130, their total debt was \$32,308.38. For those who accrued less than or equal to 130 credits, their debt was \$27,417.88. So there is a \$5,000 difference between these two groups. That's the borrowing. Then you get scholarship, then you get parents' contribution. So I can only quote to you how much the borrowing is. And please remember, in the State of New Jersey the average indebtedness of our graduates is amongst the highest in the nation.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PINKIN: And the other thought I had is, I'm a big believer in efficiency, and effectiveness, and systems analysis. So are the colleges using that type of theory to apply -- that it's not just the counselors, but also an analysis of systems that could be improved that could make it more feasible for them to be successful? It could be things like the physical plant, the time schedule -- all of those types of things.

DR. HOUSHMAND: I am a systems engineer myself, and I believe in-- I breathe systems engineering. A story: that when I was 20 years old I was in England. My first job was, I would fry 72 whole chickens at a Kentucky Fried Chicken. And the process was that I had to cut each chicken into nine pieces, wash them, put them into powder, into liquid, and

put them into -- 16 of them -- into a pressure cooker and cook these things. And my job was six hours; I was supposed to finish in six hours. I employed system engineering in here and I could finish in three hours, and get paid for six. And I believe in that. I believe in everything that you do you have to apply the science and data in making decisions -- especially as a leader, when you come to work, leave your emotion at home and always refer to facts. When you do that, good things happen.

At this university we look at every aspect of our operation through systems engineering to make sure if it's efficient; and if its not, how can we make it efficient -- everything. Therefore, people know. If somebody, for example, a manager comes to me and says, "I want to hire a person," the first thing I ask him is this, "Is that person necessary?" And they have to justify to me, with facts and data, that it is necessary. And then the next question is, "Can this hire wait?" and they have to justify to me with facts and data that it cannot wait. Only when those two questions are answered do I allow a person to be hired -- a new position to be created.

We do it in everything that we do. And we have to because -- let me tell you, the future of higher education is not relying on either taxpayers, or through the State, or students through their tuition and fees. We need to diversify our operation and find new sources of revenue. One source of revenue is a dollar saved -- or a penny saved is a penny earned. And we need to find ways in which we can make our operation efficient. We are not efficient. There are many, many areas in which we can cut costs, and when we do we can pass those to the students. In fact, one of the reasons that over the past three years we have not increased the tuition on average more than 1.6 percent is exactly because of what you just said --

because we saved a lot of money from other divisions within this university and passed them all to the students.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PINKIN: That's very commendable.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Assemblywoman Mosquera, did you have a question?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MOSQUERA: Yes, thank you, Chair.

Dr. Houshmand, thank you so much for being here and thank you for hosting the Committee. And you know that I'm one of your biggest fans.

Just one question -- just going back-- How does Rowan -- will be-- I guess, I'm not sure if you're doing it now or were thinking about doing it in the future -- address the needs of nontraditional students, especially given the fact that, as Assemblyman Moriarty mentioned, you have time constraints, family obligations. They would probably rely on more online classes than physically being here on campus.

DR. HOUSHMAND: When I came in here in 2006 we had zero online, and our technology system was in a state of disarray. Currently we have many bachelors, masters, and doctoral programs that are fully online. We have one of the best online programs in the State of New Jersey -- all of it home-grown, home-built.

The way we did that was very different and very nontraditional. I wanted to create a whole division that responds to everybody in this state -- nontraditional and traditional -- except that I could not do that by going to the State and asking for money. So we created a whole new enterprise within the university that is totally self-supporting. It pays for everything. We actually just built a building, moved to a building on Rowan Boulevard

that they are paying for themselves. Not a penny of the taxpayers' money is being spent. Furthermore, that operation generates a \$10 million surplus that really invests in terms of financial aid to our students, in terms of putting it into a general fund.

So the way we do that, we have created a whole new enterprise whose goal is out there to create different ways of convenience -- whether it is a Saturday Scholar degree program, online education, off-campus education, going to the locations like industries and hospitals to teach; and having summer programs, semesters that are not necessarily 16 weeks -- it could be 1 week, 2 weeks, 5 weeks, 7 weeks, 16 weeks, depending on the nature of what you do. We have them all -- and precisely because of that. Because up until then, 2006, we were only catering to 15 percent of the population. These are the people -- we think the age of 17 to 25. I said, "What about the remaining 85 percent, especially in today's world where being a student is a life-long learning issue for all of us." Nobody can say, "I'm done with education, I have my credentials, and my credentials are going to sustain me for the rest of my professional life." Those days are over. You know, 30 years ago you could go to an engineering school, get a mechanical engineering degree, and end up at Ford and work until retirement. That possibility is almost nonexistent today. Chances are a person who comes out of their school changes jobs 10 times during their career. And chances are those jobs are vastly different from one another. And that's another issue: How do we make sure that we train the students to be a global citizen and they're broad in knowledge, so that at any given time they can put a different hat on -- rather than creating tunnel visioned-students who can only do one thing, and if that one industry is gone,

they're lost. That is another problem that exists right now in the educational system in this country.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MOSQUERA: Thank you, Doctor.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: All right. Dr. Houshmand, thank you very much for your testimony. When we look over the 20-bill package, I felt like a lot of the things that you touched upon actually supported some of the policy and bills that we have sitting here, such as the remediation of the high school students, the dual enrollment, reverse transfer; that you actually gave us some supportive testimony on the college tuition freezing and how we can do that, how that would be a possibility.

But you also touched on the fact that the task force in that bill actually was voted and sits on the Governor's desk -- the College Affordability Task Force Bill. You feel that that's a very good idea, and you want people to come together to actually find solutions for the State of New Jersey because it's -- as you probably feel, I've heard from you today and this Committee feels -- that this is probably one of our number one issues for economic growth and development in the State of New Jersey. If we don't fix higher education in the--

DR. HOUSHMAND: It's a national issue.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: It's a national issue, yes, yes.

So I thank you for your testimony. So you have anything else that you would like to conclude with?

DR. HOUSHMAND: Thank you. I'm delighted that you are here. I hope I've been helpful. You need to know that in me you find a partner. I genuinely feel very passionate about it, precisely because of who I am and my upbringing. I came from a very poor, uneducated family, and I

know what education has done for me. And I want the exact same thing for every citizen of this country.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: We hear your passion, and we want that also.

Thank you very much.

DR. HOUSHMAND: You're welcome.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: All right. Does anybody need to take a break? (no response)

All right, we're going to move forward.

So we're going to hear next from Tim Haresign. He's the President of the Council of New Jersey State Colleges.

Good morning; we're almost into the afternoon, here.

Hi, Tim.

TIM HARESIGN, Ph.D.: Is this all right?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Yes, thank you.

Welcome.

DR. HARESIGN: Hi. I want to thank the Committee, first of all, for bringing these bills forward and for having these hearings. I think this is one of the most important issues, as we've heard already many times this morning.

And it's interesting following President Houshmand, because a lot of times the unions -- and I represent the nine four-year public schools that are not Rutgers, but we're aligned with that union also. You know, a lot of times we have disagreements with the administration, but there's a tremendous overlap between some of the things that President Houshmand

was advocating for and things that the faculty and the staff want. Because in the end, all of us want what's best for our students.

I have a seven page testimony, but I'm not going to read any of it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: No, but I'm glad you provided it. I appreciate it, because it does touch upon each one of the bills and where you stand, and I appreciate that.

DR. HARESIGN: And one of the things you'll see on those bills -- one of them indicates that we'd like to see further study; and we're very interested in the task force -- either the bill that was passed or some other kind of task force -- to bring all the groups together. I think there's a lot of expertise in this state, including students who-- I'm very glad to see students here today too. We need to hear their stories also. For example, I'll just give you one example from one of your bills because -- the bill that says that colleges should no longer be allowed to force students into meal plans. When we looked at it, we thought, "That's a great idea. That should be the student's choice"-- or I think the bill may have changed and you can roll over the accounts -- one of my professional advisors said that may have some financial aid implications. If you don't require meal plans, some students may not be allowed to use financial aid to pay for food. So we need to think about all these things very carefully before we go ahead; think about the implications. But I know the intent on all of your bills was to further the education of our students and find ways to make it more affordable. And those two things are greatly interlinked.

So again I want to thank the Committee. And I also want to state unconditionally that the unions are not opposed to standards, not

opposed to accountability. We think graduation rates certainly should be one of the measures that we look at, but we need to think about looking at it in context and looking at, perhaps, other measures. We are very concerned about the impact on more of the nontraditional students and students who come from less-privileged backgrounds.

Dr. Houshmand's point about per credit -- which is something that some institutions used to do, including my own. In addition to being the union President, I also teach at Stockton. And that interaction with students is a very important part of my life. And I'm an advisor to students also. And I used to be able to tell students when they were struggling-- When a student comes to my office and they're struggling -- whether it's a student I'm teaching, or a student I'm advising -- and I advise about 50 students per year -- the first thing I ask now is, "How many hours are you working?" I don't ask them-- For almost all students, the answer is they're working; it's just a matter of how much. And they'll say -- they'll typically say 20, 30, some say 40. I used to be able to say to them, "Maybe you should cut your hours and cut the numbers of credits you're taking." So right now, because it's a flat rate, the students will take 18 credits because they're paying the flat rate and they figure, "Well, if I'm going to pay a flat rate, I should take the maximum credits." And they try and work 30 to 40 hours a week. And we have casinos near Stockton where you can work any hour of the day or night.

Most students can't do that; most students can't work 30 hours and take 18 credits. So they're not doing well. But it's very hard for me to say, "Don't do that anymore," because they need to work. In the past, what I could do is say to them, "Why don't you cut down to 12 or 15, cut

your hours to 20 or 25,” and I sit down and work out a personal plan with them and say -- sometimes you can call the employer, and I even say, “Can we make a deal -- that the minute finals are over, you can work him 60 hours for the next two weeks after that?”

And then take courses over the summer. Right now they see summer courses as kind of a penalty, because they’re paying extra for those. If you paid per credit you’d actually allow students to stretch their dollar and be more effective. It does make it a little more complicated for a four-year graduation rate, because sometimes what I’d be telling students is you may be moving towards a five-year graduation, but you’re going to graduate with a 3.2 or a 3.5 GPA instead of a 2.2 or a 2.5, or even the struggling-to-pass GPA right now. And this is especially troubling for first-generation students.

The one other thing -- and then I’d be happy to take questions - - is I also agree with Dr. Houshmand on the idea that we should think about investing heavily in the first two years. There are studies that show that if you get the student through the first two years, their retention rate and graduation rate is vastly improved.

And one of the things that’s really, really important is a personal relationship -- a faculty member, an advisor -- but actually one study has shown somebody at the college who knows your name. And this is especially important for students of minority backgrounds. who are not part of the majority -- feel kind of lost. And they’re the ones with the highest drop-out rates. But if somebody on campus knows your name, there is lots of data showing that you tend to stay because you feel like there is somebody there who actually cares about you.

So an investment in the first couple of years-- And by that, it may be more advisors, it may be increased funding for EOF -- which is shown to be-- Students who go through EOF actually have a very high rate of success in college because they get a little extra attention upfront. So there's lots of information that shows put your investment upfront and prepare the students for the last two years where, actually, they might be better suited-- I think for some first-year students, online courses are actually the worst thing you can do for them, because they feel so disconnected. They need to have a personal touch those first couple of years.

And I'll stop there.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: I thank you very much for your testimony.

I'm looking over what you submitted in writing, and I love that you say that you want things studied. How long do you want them to be studied, though? I mean, when we say *study*, can we study them for the next month, you and me, and then make some amendments? That's what I'm thinking, because I see some of these bills actually moving forward.

DR. HARESIGN: Yes, certainly on some of these. And you know what? I realized this morning, as I was looking through them, I forgot to include your bill on the partnerships between local businesses and the community colleges, which we fully support; we think that's fantastic. And some of these we just think small amendments -- some of them I think we sort of amend. We support them the way they are, but we'd like to see even more.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: With little changes, yes.

DR. HARESIGN: Like the accountability for the private institutions, which are reaping huge profits on the backs of students. And they're not disclosing to the students the failure rates, indebtedness -- all sorts of things.

So some of them -- certainly they could be studied for a short amount of time, or get some input; and then some of these things that this higher-- I think-- What I've heard is there's an expectation the Governor will sign this bill, and I think some of the things might be better for it to let the Commission have a chance to issue a report. But that bill puts a time limit on it -- I think it was a year. Was it a year?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Yes, it is a year.

It's just that some of these issues I feel like are extremely timely, so if every time you wait you say, "We're waiting a year, let's wait, next year," it doesn't take care of the actual burden and issues that the students are facing today -- to actually move forward in a positive fashion showing that we are in support of not only decreasing the costs of college, but also increasing the success of the students.

Does anyone have--

Assemblyman Cryan.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: A couple of quick things. Thanks for your thoughts and your comments here; and I appreciate it. And by the way, to your membership -- thank you.

DR. HARESIGN: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: You guys do-- They bubble up when they talk about students, much more so than in academia, so to speak.

Have you had any students, in your time as a counselor, who have had to leave because the average increase over the past six years in higher ed publics is north of 20 percent? Actually, it's to almost 23 percent. Have you had any students have to leave both because tuition and fees individually have escalated to that point which is incredibly higher than the rate of inflation? Have students looked at you and said, "I just simply can't afford to stay here anymore?"

DR. HARESIGN: Yes, we have seen-- It's heartbreaking. And the problem is, a lot of times a student will say to you, "I'm just-- I need to take a semester off to work," which, you know, sometimes I can understand that. But the problem is they don't come back a lot of the times.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Absolutely. Once you lose the flow, you lose all that.

DR. HARESIGN: Once you leave-- I think the idea of having someone follow up with these students, as President Houshmand suggested -- look for them and find them. Because I know, I've lost track--

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Or make it so they can balance a budget and plan their finances accordingly -- would certainly be helpful.

DR. HARESIGN: Yes, certainly, certainly.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: The other thing I wanted to at least mention to you -- or at least have in mind -- there are three schools in New Jersey that don't have a 50 percent graduation rate in higher ed over six years. And I know that's a sensitive subject. The fact of the matter is they haven't had one in decades. And the reality is, is that Bill in particular has created a buzz because of the hammer of closing the school. The fact of the matter is, is there are tens of thousands -- if not, without exaggerating, if

one wanted to look over a 20-year period -- probably north of 100,000 students just out of those three who walked in expecting a degree and walked out without one. I mean, Assemblyman Moriarty is here; one could argue that maybe that's fraud under the Consumer Act as opposed to -- or predatory lending -- as opposed to a higher ed issue. I mean, I've heard that here, sitting here -- and I don't mean to be that dramatic.

My point to you is this. Do you, as representing folks who are on the frontlines every day, have a problem with establishing standards that parents, families, legislators, government, and, most importantly, the folks behind you with the cool hair -- who still have it (laughter) -- can actually hold someone accountable? Does that seem unreasonable to you?

DR. HARESIGN: Yes, I think we need to look at probably some more things besides graduation rates or in addition to graduation rates including remediation.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I agree with you on that. But do you have, in your time advising students, have you had students who have gone to -- and your institution is Stockton, correct?

DR. HARESIGN: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Have you had students who have gone to Stockton and have come in and said, "I'm not really here for a degree?"

DR. HARESIGN: No.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Okay. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Assemblywoman Mosquera.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MOSQUERA: A quick question to ask.

I was reviewing your testimony. Can you please expand on your opposition to 2801, Assemblywoman Jasey's Bill?

DR. HARESIGN: Some of our institutions have-- The institutions are very different. Some institutions, for example -- Stockton and Ramapo have a four-credit system which leads to 128 credits to graduate. It's still very doable in four years. You take four courses a semester, and in four years you graduate. So I think this sort of one-size-fits-all model-- It's the same as the Common Core numbering. It's not a bad idea, but we just need to make sure that faculty are involved in that, as we have to think about how to do it at the four-credit institutions -- four-credit-per-course institutions, and make sure that nothing is being lost for those students by cutting out courses.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MOSQUERA: But generally, aren't those four credits tied to the sciences? I know when I was in school, generally the four-credits were -- like, you either get three credits for the class and then a credit for the lab -- one credit would be for the lab. So is that-- I mean, I graduated back in 1999, so things might have changed.

DR. HARESIGN: No, the model at those two institutions is that instead of 50-minute classes we have 75-minute classes, three times a week. So that's a four-credit course according to the Carnegie system. And the sciences, actually, you take a lab and a lot of times you're getting-- What I tell the students is you're getting extra for your money, because they get four credits for a class and a lab and a lot of times they don't pay for the lab. They might pay lab fees. The students say, "Well, how come I'm not getting more credits?" But the sciences have a requirement to do hands-on courses; I teach in the sciences. But all the courses are four

credits. Some of the introductory courses with labs are five credits because the lab does count for one credit.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Along the same lines, what Dr. Houshmand was saying was that he felt that there should be just general ed: you're given credit for general ed, and it should be that across the board throughout all institutions throughout the State of New Jersey. So you took your general ed courses, and those -- for two years, and they're transferable no matter what your degree is -- whatever your degree path is. So would you support that?

DR. HARESIGN: Yes, I think that's a good idea. I think we have that in place at a lot of institutions. For example -- I'll just give you an example from Stockton -- in terms of advising, we have what's called a *CAPP audit system*. So any student at any time during their career at Stockton can go online and they can say, "I'm a history major. Where am I right at this minute in terms of graduation?" They can also, using the computer, say, "What if I want to be a finance major? How would I be, in terms of finance?" So if they ever wanted to think about switching they can see-- It's called a *what-if analysis*. What if I get a Bachelor of Science? What if I get a Bachelor of Arts? And that tool is then used for when they come to see me. The minute they come to my office I use the CAPP audit, and I take a look at where they are. It tells you exactly what you still need to do. And we have -- and most of the schools, I believe, and I'm sure Rowan, has done this -- sat down with people at community colleges to figure out how their general studies requirements transfer over -- because we do transfer. If you take English Composition -- whatever it's called -- that becomes your freshman writing requirement. It's called different things. So

the general studies do transfer pretty well, and then for the upper-level courses they need to go to somebody-- If they want to transfer Advanced Ecological Principals -- which we may have Ecological Principals III; they're not the same name -- they would come to me and I would say, "Okay, we're transferring that over as Advanced Ecological--"

And there do need to be, I think, incentives for students and requirements for students to see their advisors, because if a student comes to me every semester I will get them out in four years if they listen to my advice. Even if they've transferred, and even if they've-- Now, if they're a history major for three years and they come to me and say, "I want to be a biology major," we're probably not going to get them out in a year. But if they come to me in their sophomore year, we'll figure it out.

So an investment in either faculty advising or professional advisors -- as Dr. Houshmand was talking about -- who can do that for you, because you need the personal touch and you need someone saying, "Let me look at what you've done, and I can figure it out for you." Because I want to get the student-- You know, I know how much this costs, and I never want to keep a student an extra semester for one or two courses. The most tragic thing is, "I need two more courses." A lot of time it's one course and we'll figure out a way to do-- If I know that early on, we'll say, "All right, there's this one course that's not offered; do an independent study to get it done." So we'll figure out a way to do it, for one course, if they come see me. If you come to me in April and say -- and you haven't seen me in a year or two, and you say, "I just found out I'm short a credit," there's not much I can do with three weeks left in the semester, and you may need to be there over the summer to take one course. And there's a danger, though;

you're one course short, you leave -- these are some of the students that sometimes don't come back -- one course short. So we have those situations.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: And that situation does-- It doesn't happen every once in every 10 years; it happens quite frequently because that's why we, as a legislative body, have said that something has to be taken care of. We want people to graduate in four years, or the two year colleges in two years.

And that's why we want a standard for that. Because everyone can't be you, right? Everyone's not going to be that acceptable to every student who comes along. They're not going to be that accommodating. And so that's why we think that there should be a standard that they should follow.

DR. HARESIGN: Now, your pathways idea of-- I think a CAPP audit system or something like we have at Stockton should be available to every campus. And there should be some mechanism to ensure that the students have checked -- gone online-- The students need to be going online and saying, "How close am I to graduation?" And they need to be-- The students who are really engaged will come to me and say, "I'm concerned. My CAPP audit says I'm not going to get there," and we'll figure it out. But sometimes students are just sort of drifting through, where they're -- I think there's no person who will -- that they feel comfortable going to. I think that's part of the problem. So whether it's a faculty member, or a professional advisor, somebody in the financial aid office, they need to have a person they can go to with a problem.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Good point.

DR. HARESIGN: Somebody who can pick up a phone and solve a problem for them.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Any questions?

Assemblywoman Pinkin.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PINKIN: Well, I think to your point, I think that many times students who are working and taking so many credits and working so many hours -- they don't even have time to do that; never mind to try to go and identify who the right person is, and make an appointment, and try to sit through what I call the *degree in red tape*.

DR. HARESIGN: Yes. That's a good point. When they're working so much, and the faculty member has their own schedule-- They'll contact me and I'll say, "Can you come on Tuesday at 10," because I finish my class at 9:30. "Oh, I can't come that day." "How about this time?" And we'll play this game for a while, and sometimes the student doesn't send a follow-up e-mail or I-- To be honest, sometimes it scrolls off my page and I don't get back to them, and it drifts. So I agree -- there needs to be a lot of access and professional advisors who are always there, are a very useful resource.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PINKIN: Again, I think it comes back to the system analysis -- some of it.

DR. HARESIGN: I agree, I agree.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: All right; anybody else? (no response)

Thank you very much, Tim, for your testimony. I appreciate you coming in and testifying, and we look forward to working with you in the future.

DR. HARESIGN: Yes, I can certainly work with you on any of these bills.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Absolutely.

DR. HARESIGN: Okay, thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Assemblyman Moriarty.

ASSEMBLYMAN MORIARTY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just want to apologize. I was asked to substitute for a colleague here today, and I can only stay another minute. I have another commitment, so I didn't know we were going to run this long.

I want to apologize to the students who are here. I won't be here to hear your testimony, but I will confer with the Chair following this to hear the full text of what you have to say -- and to the other speakers. But I have another commitment; I'm sorry that I have to bid you adieu.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: That's all right.

ASSEMBLYMAN MORIARTY: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: The hearing is being recorded, so--

Thank you.

All right. Dr. Ray Yannuzzi, President of Camden County College.

Dr. Yannuzzi.

L A W R E N C E A. N E S P O L I, D.Ed.: Joined by Dr. Larry Nespoli.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Oh, and Dr. Nespoli, Council of County Colleges. The two of you please come up together. That's wonderful.

DR. NESPOLI: We're going to do this together. Larry Nespoli, with the State organization for the Community Colleges; and President Yannuzzi, Camden County College, and also the Vice Chair of our statewide group. He has some brief remarks he wants to share, then we'll take your questions.

But I do want to say what a good friend but, more importantly, a great leader Ali Houshmand is. I knew him when he was at Drexel, of course, and we're fortunate to have him. I appreciate his remarks in general, but his remarks about the county colleges, especially, were appreciated.

And a quick sidebar, and then to Dr. Yannuzzi.

One of the things we're most proud of in my time here in New Jersey is we approached Ali, when he was Provost, and pitched to him the idea of a new doctorate program in community college administration and leadership for mid-level New Jersey community college administrators and faculty. And with his leadership we got that done. Dr. Yannuzzi and others are teaching the program alongside with Rowan faculty. He served on dissertation committees, so we're both proud of that partnership -- that it's provided professional advancement opportunities for many of our mid-level deans, directors, and faculty. I'm proud of that partnership with Rowan and our partnership with Ali.

So Dr. Yannuzzi.

RAYMOND A. YANNUZZI, Ph.D.: Yes, I'd like to second what Larry says about working with Ali Houshmand. I've known him for about 16 years; I've worked with him in a number of capacities when he was at Drexel, and now at Rowan. And he is probably one of the best

friends community colleges have had -- innovative programs and working with us in a variety of ways. So we're happy to hear his remarks today; they were inspiring to us.

But I want to thank you, Assemblywoman, and the rest of your Committee for bringing these bills forward. These are very important issues, as Ali said, that affect all of higher education and particularly community colleges. And we know we can do a better job in all of these areas that have been discussed. I think people do come to us for degrees; they also come to us for certificates, and then there are some students -- to answer Assemblyman Cryan's question -- who really don't know what they want -- they don't know if they want a degree or a certificate, but they come to us and it's part of our job to get them focused on that.

So many people come to community colleges for reasons really not even associated with their academic plans, but they end up doing well and being successful. The person who we honored this year, who is now the head of the Educational Testing Service, one of our alumni, he was a pipefitter. And somebody came to him and said, "Gee, you should look into going to college," and now he is the head of ETS worldwide.

Our Board Chair was working in a factory and didn't quite know what to do, but wanted to advance in the union and went and got some training. And now he is the head of the Delaware River Port Authority. So many of our graduates come to us with a plan, and those we need to get officially and thoroughly through just as quick as we can; others take a little more time, and that's where we need to focus on some of the things that these bills would give us help in doing.

Now, our colleges got together about four or five years ago -- the trustees and the presidents -- and focused on what would be seven or eight, what we called, *Big Ideas* that would help us address the kinds of issues that you're also addressing. Many of the big ideas that we've been focusing on, and had committees on, and developed white papers on over the last four years are the same issues that are in your bills; so we know a lot about these issues. We commend the Assembly for taking them up, and we certainly would be willing to help as you formulate them and bring these along further.

In a perfect world everybody would graduate. We want everybody to graduate with a two-year degree, a certificate -- some sort of a credential that will help them live better and work better. But the reality is many of our students come to us with issues and problems -- maybe even more so than some of the ones who attend the baccalaureate institutions -- because we deal with older students; we deal with students from a less-privileged background, in many cases; and we deal with students who have come to us with needs in remediation, perhaps more so than baccalaureate institutions like Rowan face.

Ali said about 60 percent; I think in our case, in my college, it's between 65 and 70 percent of the students come to us needing at least one remedial course. And some of that has to do with issues that we are addressing; there is no one thing that's going to solve the need to lessen remediation and to speed up students' time-to-graduation. There are a number of fronts that we're working on. I'll share a few of these. One that you talked about, and that's in your Bill, is to work more closely with secondary schools. I think this will, in the long term, be the best strategy as

the Common Core curriculum is fully implemented across all of the districts and all of the grades; and as the assessments are used to test college readiness from 3rd grade all the way through to 11th, the colleges are going to be involved. We had a conference at Rider a couple of weeks ago with 400 college faculty and staff members to learn more about the Common Core curriculum and the PARCC assessment program. So I think we are ready to participate. We do things now; we go into high schools now and give a test -- an ACCUPLACER test; it's one test that attempts to show college readiness. But it will be much better when the Common Core curriculum is in place and we will get the results specifically by student without having to test them again; and then work with them while they're in high school, in the time between high school and coming to us, and in their first semesters with us in order to address their remediation so students don't need to take as many remedial courses and can graduate sooner or reach whatever their goals are.

Another thing that was mentioned today, which also we're very involved with, in my county, every high school in our county we have some dual enrollment courses. These are good for the advanced students and they can earn credits; but even the student who is in the middle who takes a course gets some incentive, realizes that they can succeed in college work, and it gives them a little boost to come and start with -- three credits or six credits that they might have earned while they were seniors in high school.

Another thing which we talked about a lot today, and it's frankly one of the weaknesses in community colleges because of the numbers we serve and the lack of resources we have, is providing better counseling and career pathways. We tend to have scrimped on that, if you

want, in community colleges in general. Nationally students are left a little bit more on their own than they are certainly at a residential college or at a school like Rowan. We provide advisement, but the students need to seek it out more than us seeking them out. And one of the things we need to do is improve the career pathway. Several of our colleges are involved in the Achieving the Dream national funding program, which is helping to do that. And then we hope to learn from the things that those colleges do and apply them across all of our system.

But all of these things that I have mentioned are in your Bills A-2800, 2817, 2818 -- they cover these issues that I've mentioned. And when you have your next hearing in Hudson County Community College we'll be prepared to talk about those again, or some more today.

But I want to mention a few of the others just to get out what our opinions are in some of those -- which have also been in Ali's testimony: 2802 -- reverse transfer and near-completers. This is one which is good for us on two sides. It's good for us to get a little bit of credit for people who we do work with up to 45, 50, 60 credits, but then they transfer and we don't get -- they're a drop-out as far as our statistics are concerned. Our own Board Chair transferred to Drexel with 56 credits; last year we gave him a diploma because we said, "Gee, if you give back five more credits you can be a Camden County College graduate too." So we gave John Hanson a diploma at our last ceremony. But he went on and got a master's, and went on and did all these other things. But it's good for us to claim these people as graduates, but also on the other side -- and Ali mentioned this, and we do it too -- people accumulate a certain number of credits without filing for a degree, or not getting exactly the right credits they need for a degree. We

try to sweep through the records every once in a while and say, “Gee, Gabriela, did you know -- you said you were in business, but if you take a degree in general ed you could graduate now,” or something like that. We’ve done that. The first year we did that I think we picked up 250, but every year we get some. And we say, “No, you graduated. Now you can still stay and take other courses if they fit your discipline.” But being able to reverse transfer and being able to get near completers is important.

Also, partial completers is another thing that we need to do. And we’re engaged, particularly now, in the law enforcement and public safety community because we teach at the Police Academy, the Fire Academy; and students who finish that training get a certain number of credits or a degree. Some of them go on and get criminal justice or fire science degrees, but others stop. But it’s important to them for advancement in their careers to have an associate’s, and then a baccalaureate. So we say, “Gee, you have 15 credits. If you come back now you can work toward a degree.” That’s successful.

We agree with A-2805; the Common Core’s numbering would be of value to us -- both Common Core numbering and, as Ali suggested, the Common Core’s curriculum content -- which is a much harder thing. We think the Lampitt Bill was a great first step in doing this, and the transfer committee has worked since then. But to the degree that legislation can push this along a little bit, a state like Florida -- which is a much more top-down higher education system, which decrees things and then every college in Florida has to do it -- shows much higher rates of success in part because of Common Core’s numbering and common curriculum. New Jersey took the path 15 years ago of letting colleges go

more on their own and they've developed in different ways. Some of that is a great strength that-- Some of our colleges have developed it, but in others-- It's difficult for us in community colleges because if a student wants to take an education program at this college they have to take these courses with these numbers; but if they want to go to this college, they have to take different ones. And that four credits to three credits sometimes is a problem for transfer too. So a common system of numbering and content, while it might stifle the creativity and diversity of some faculty at some institutions, it will go a great way to, I think, increasing success rates.

Cap on the number of credits is another one. We fight this all the time. It should be 60 credits, 120 credits, maybe 62 and 124. But what has happened, particularly in community colleges, we have a lot of certifications from different -- particularly allied health and professional fields. They want to see as many courses in their field; but then the gen ed has to come in, and they want that history and math and soc and psych. And general education can change. I mean, one of the things colleges need to be aware of is that what we considered to be the required core courses has to evolve; and I think that's going to happen with the Common Core curriculum -- coming all the way through K-12 we're going to be asked to look at what we do and maybe change it. It wasn't that long ago that you had to know Latin and Greek to be considered a college graduate. And now some of the things that we require may also be different. One of the big issues now, that I think results in a number of students being placed in at least one remedial course when they come to us, is a calculus-based math sequence. I'm not a math teacher, but there's been a lot of discussion

among math faculty that I've listened in on about a more stats-based, rather than calc-based, math program and the preparations for that.

Many students-- It has to do with the timing of when they take their algebra in secondary school, and then it has to do with the curriculum they want to go into. Is calculus necessary for someone to be a college graduate? I'm sure there are good arguments for that; I could argue why the understanding of poetry is necessary for everybody who is a college graduate, but maybe not as much these days.

So those are the bills. I'd be happy to answer any questions, or our response on any of them. My colleagues will be with you at Hudson County to talk more.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Thank you very much, Dr. Yannuzzi.

I'm encouraged by some of the comments that you made, because they're very supportive of some of the bills that we do have in the package. And I find it fascinating about the remediation. And as we move forward with PARCC and getting some of the push back now from some of our State Legislators on having the Common Core and the PARCC assessments, how do you feel about that? I mean, that's--

DR. YANNUZZI: Well, I'm the Chair of the New Jersey Higher Education Leadership Team that brings together college faculty and staff on PARCC, so I'm very involved with this process.

I don't think there could be too much argument against the Common Core itself -- the kinds of things they're doing to bring math into other subjects, to have to write sequence of mathematics throughout 12 grades; to have reading and writing more focused on nonfiction as well as

fiction. I mean, I'm an English teacher, I love poems and so forth, but when students come to college they have to read soc, psych, history, accounting textbooks and they don't get as much exposure to that currently in the K-12 curriculum.

What people have raised some objections to -- and I think this will happen a little bit in New Jersey -- is the speed of the implementation, and the consequences of the implementation of the PARCC assessments for teacher evaluation and for high school graduation. I think the State Department of Ed has been pretty clear on how things would work. I think that's where some people have had objections. I don't think you can say that it's better to do the curriculum the way we've been doing it for many years. I think the curriculum part is the key; the test part is what has a lot of people nervous and excited. That will be worked out; the curriculum is the key. And I think that is working out. From people I know in school districts, they said they've gotten more professional development in the last 2 or 3 years than they've had in the previous 10. And the tests themselves, as they've gone through the pilots, have worked well -- from all the reports that we get, nationally and statewide. All we did this year was a pilot of the test itself, and now we're going to go back and make a better test, then they're going to norm that test. It will be a couple of years yet before there are results that are meaningful, but what we hope to get soon -- maybe even as soon as next spring -- are the diagnostic results from students in their junior year to say, "Okay, very good, little Joey. Here's where you are now; if you want to come to us in September, here's what you need to do, and there's some things we can do."

We have a grant this year from higher ed, from the Federal government through Rochelle Hendricks's office, to develop pilot projects at all the community colleges, working with two or three school districts in each county to say, "What did you try? Did you try online things in junior year? Did you bring them together in the summer?" -- various ways of addressing those remediation needs. Now we do it just with something like the ACCUPLACER test. Once the Common Core is fully implemented and the PARCC assessments are in place, we should get very detailed results for every student that we can help use to get them through.

Because we don't want to teach-- Community colleges don't want to be in the developmental business to the degree that we are. We do it out of necessity -- just like we do adult basic ed, and GED, and ESL. We'll do that, because we meet the people where they are. But the better prepared students are when they come to us, the better we'll be able to help them go on to what else they want to do.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Let me ask you a question. Coming from the public schools -- and the public schools are the ones participating in the PARCC assessments; so what are we going to do for students who are coming from private schools, from other schools that--

DR. YANNUZZI: I haven't heard too much discussion of that; I mean, will they be taking the same test? Well, it depends on how -- and I'm not speaking for Bari Erlichson or Dave or anything, but once a New Jersey diploma requirement is tied to a PARCC assessment -- and I don't know if that's the plan -- they would have to be taking the same test. I would think they're going to take the same test at some point.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: The private schools?

DR. YANNUZZI: I would think they would have to if they're going to get a New Jersey diploma, and if, in the years ahead, the New Jersey diploma-- There are costs involved in a lot of this.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Yes, okay.

DR. YANNUZZI: No, I think the Common Core is a good thing. I think the testing part has people nervous, but that will sort itself out. But it will help us, it will help with-- Essentially, the implementation of the Common Core curriculum K-12 is the long-term answer to a lot of the issues that you raised -- not the full answer, but that will help.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Thank you very much.

Any questions?

Assemblyman Cryan.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Thanks for all your comments and your input; it's appreciated.

Four years or five years ago for the Big Ideas project? Because in Camden right now -- and I'm from Union County, so I'll give the Union County stats first -- 3 percent graduation -- Union County is 3 percent in two years; 9 percent in three years; 58 percent remediation rate -- at least, as of the 2011 cohort. Camden, 4 percent graduation rate; 17 after three years; 74 percent remediation rate.

DR. YANNUZZI: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Has it, since the beginning of the big ideas project, diminished?

DR. YANNUZZI: Yes, because part of the things that we've done is address the courses that--

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Can you tell me from what to what?

DR. YANNUZZI: Well, it's probably a percent or two. It's probably 18, 19 percent now.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Okay, so--

DR. YANNUZZI: We need to do more, but we need to address it on all of those issues -- counseling -- all of these--

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Does the Big Ideas project, which is, if I understand your comments right -- include all the stakeholders? And it's four years in the making -- four or five; does it have a consistent theme or a consistent approach to remediation in any way? Is it consistent by--

DR. YANNUZZI: Yes, all of the colleges are participating together in developing plans of a variety of kinds that have to do with changing the sequence of courses. Many colleges now have a two- or three-sequence remediation course in reading, writing, and math -- which is unsustainable anymore in terms of financial aid, and in terms of time-to-graduation -- all those issues. So one of the things they're doing is compressing that. They're combining--

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I'm sorry. So I don't need to know all the specifics. My question to you is, is the remediation rate approach the same at Union County College as it is at Camden?

DR. YANNUZZI: I don't think it's the same at exactly any one of the 19 colleges. I would think the people are doing different ideas in different places, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Isn't that fundamentally one of the issues -- that we don't have any sort of standard way of doing this? And

why doesn't the Big Ideas project, over the past four to five years, have a consistent model?

DR. YANNUZZI: Because it's a collegial participatory thing, and nobody's saying you have to do it this way, you have to do it that way. But what I think emerges are what the best practices are in places that have better results, and then the other colleges say, "We need to do that too."

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: If a student isn't ready for math, for argument's sake, coming out of Union High School or Camden High School, isn't the remediation approach -- shouldn't it be standard?

DR. YANNUZZI: I think it would be better if it were. I don't think it is.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: That's why this package is here -- because of the frustration, from somebody who sits on this side, is it's like hitting rubber, you know, melted rubber. It never is the same. And I guess - And I'm very appreciative, and I know you've embraced some of these, and I'm very grateful for that. But the reality is, is the numbers haven't gone down, and the approach is still scattershot.

DR. YANNUZZI: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: And this is an unrequested opinion; I'm hopeful PARCC works. I think there are issues with that, and I do want to ask you a question about ACCUPLACER that we heard at TCNJ. But I'm tired of waiting for the next big idea. Who was that, Samsung, the next big idea? (laughter) I'm tired of the next big idea. You guys have had four to five years; why isn't there a consistent approach? Why isn't-- And I'm not saying this directly to you--

DR. YANNUZZI: Because there are 19 separate community colleges.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Which is why you now have a legislative package in front of you that says get involved in the schools.

DR. NESPOLI: Let me get in on this a little bit if I can, just to this extent, Assemblyman.

We've brought in some of the best minds from throughout the country-- And by the way, you should know that these bills really mirror a national community college conversation, which is a really good thing. Fifty years now community colleges have been in business; access was really the one word that best captures the mission.

That's changed now, and this is your message: success. Access is important, but it's not enough. It has to be access to success.

So to your point about standardizing, I would say -- and we can have a longer conversation offline -- but on the math side there are probably two or three premier models that are showing promise throughout the country. And we've got some of our colleges -- all of our colleges are onboard with the basic frameworks. But there are different-- Colleges are at different places at different times. Similarly on the English side. I'll give you one example. Community College of Baltimore County -- where this gentleman used to be a leader -- they have a program called Accelerated Learning. And so we've got, now, probably seven or eight of our colleges are out in front of that. The idea is to compress developmental ed so that students can more quickly get into college-level math and pursue their careers and their dreams.

So we don't want to leave you with the impression that among the 19 there is no joining around best ideas; there is.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I didn't it mean that way.

DR. NESPOLI: There is.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: But what I wanted to see -- and I don't do what you do you, and they don't call me Doctor; and I'm a huge admirer. They tell me you do amazing things here, but it's an incredibly frustrating thing to sit here and listen to the Big Ideas after four-- And I'll go back. These graduation rates I just read to you haven't changed in 25 years, which means there are thousands of students who went into debt who left. And you want to argue whether they were prepared when they got there, but the bottom line is the accountability factor needs to change. If you take them, they're yours; you have to finish with them, okay? That's how this rolls. I mean, it's like that in business, it's like that in life. And I don't want to wait for PARCC, and I don't want to sit here in two years and have some Commission say, "You know what? Maybe we're going to do it this way." These bills are a reflection of, frankly, the inertia that we--

DR. YANNUZZI: We're with you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: All right? So my question to you is -- and I only have two, I promise, and my last one is going to be on ACCUPLACER -- but what's the problem, and why can't folks agree on a standard way to provide remediation effort -- which includes the ownership of the student -- in order to provide a pathway to graduation for community colleges? Why is that a problem? And I noticed that you didn't mention in your bill comments the Bill that directly affects the one right on it -- 2804, I

think, is the number -- community colleges providing just a plan to graduate a third of its students.

DR. YANNUZZI: No, no, we agree with that.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: You support--

DR. NESPOLI: Oh, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Okay. So what's the problem with getting just a standard-- I just heard Dr. Ali singing your praises to high heavens, but talked about the fact that he wants this to be the student at Camden or Gloucester, or wherever -- to say, "I'm enrolled here; I'm going to Rowan." Why can't we have some standardization to do that?

DR. YANNUZZI: I don't think standardization is bad when you're trying to address the issues that you're trying to address here; I think part of the problem is the nature of academia where people like to think for themselves and they think the way they do it is the best way. And part of it is the fact that the State, some years ago, gave a little more freedom than might be conducive to some of the things you're trying to accomplish now. So you can say at our school you need this history course, but if you're going over here, you need this history course instead -- things like that.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Doctor, given your great work-- I'll use the Union County quote: At 3 percent, at 9 percent, at 58 percent remediation; at huge, huge percentages of folks who go into debt-- The time for academia and the big theory (*sic*) is over, and the time for results is here. Because we've had it; at least, a lot of families -- I'm speaking for myself, I should say.

My last question to you is, you heard the Doctor talk about reverse transfer data. It was fascinating -- Doctor Ali -- in terms of some of that data.

DR. YANNUZZI: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Do you guys track that?

DR. YANNUZZI: Oh, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: The standard stuff, all along the way for transfers?

DR. YANNUZZI: We have to rely on the student responding, though. If there were like -- I think Stockton now has, with Atlantic Cape -- if that was a statewide program, where the data could be shared, we could award diplomas to people who left us with a number of credits -- where they would have had a degree but didn't apply, left too soon, whatever. We contact people, we ask them, we say, "Hey, you have credits, we're going to give you a degree." But as far as people transferring back in reverse, it's harder -- especially with us, many of our students go to Philadelphia and then we don't have as great of contact.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Okay.

DR. YANNUZZI: But in the state it would be a good State policy thing, if the goal were to increase credentials and increase the numbers of degrees, if there were a planned credit transfer. Because you get into issues, "Well, I don't know if I can give you that data," or the person has to release it. If it were for that purpose releasable, I think it would help us increase our rates of graduation, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Thank you so, so much of being here, and amplifying this conversation. Thank you.

DR. YANNUZZI: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: All right, any other questions?

Assemblywoman Pinkin.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PINKIN: Well, I think it's great that we're looking at all this. What I hear when I talk to people in the community, whether it's students or parents, especially people who are coming here from another country -- they say their expectation was that we had the best system. And now they find out we don't have the best system. I don't think that-- And they're wondering why other countries are now outpacing us in this measure. And I think while we're having these hearings, I don't think anybody is suggesting that fitting into-- You know, the standards are crucial; it sounds like the standards are very necessary, but it's not just giving the degree just for the purpose of meeting the numbers. And I'm sure you don't mean that, either. And I think that some of the students themselves probably figured out -- because they were smart enough to figure out -- that this isn't going anywhere in a systematic way, "so why should I continue to pursue it? Because it's just costing me too much on a personal financial level."

But you know, again, I think that the receptivity to looking at standards and meeting performance objectives is something that everybody, I think, is working towards. So I appreciate hearing your information on the remedial program. Because I had to sit here and think to myself, "Is there something with the remedial program why we're perpetuating it, why we need such a high level of remediation?" I mean, I heard what you said, and I'm new to the Higher Ed Committee, but it sounds like the Core Curriculum, as you said, is necessary. And, you know, the testing maybe

needs to be redefined a little bit better. But certainly having that-- Maybe we were too liberal, and now we have to go back to some standards.

DR. YANNUZZI: I think we gave, perhaps, too many choices at some time in an attempt to make more things available, an attempt to be open to everyone, and as part of the community college ethos. But yet it has gotten in the way of some of these issues that you talk about here. Too many choices, too many options and, as you heard Ali said, even talking about some of his students that they started one program, switched to another. The relatively low cost of ours makes it more possible to do that, but it does also impact on all of the issues we talked about here today.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Dr. Yannuzzi, when we had our last hearing we had NJEA testify, and they discussed about the failure rate of the ACCUPLACER. So do you still use that, or--

DR. YANNUZZI: Most of the colleges do; most of the community colleges do. It's a test, there's nothing magic about that test. I think whatever test you use, that was standardize according to those same kinds of content principles would yield similar results.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Okay.

DR. YANNUZZI: I think it's not the test itself, but it's the connection, when it's given -- what content is on it, and what you do with the results -- that make the difference in the issues you're trying to address today. I think what will happen once the Common Core is in place and students who-- The half of our students who come to us right out of high school -- we'll still need some kind of test for the other half -- it will be easier to use the diagnostic information from that instead of just giving a test. I think what does create a higher rate is when the test is used without

any further diagnostic support to know, “All right, Celeste, you got a 27.” “Well, what does that mean? What did I do wrong?” You can get a more expensive version of it that says, “Celeste, you got a 27, but you did well in these; these are the four areas you need to work on.” Now, we’re doing that now. The colleges have bought more sophisticated testing equipment, and what we’re saying is, “Look, Celeste, you did great on three parts. Here’s the part that you got all your wrong answers. Here’s the thing you can use, take this home, log on, and spend 15 hours on this over the next three weeks, then come back and take the test again.” That’s one of the things we’re doing to address it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: This is for that student, because this isn’t for your-- Are your high school students having to take the ACCUPLACER---

DR. YANNUZZI: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: All of them

DR. YANNUZZI: Right now, all of the students who come to us to us -- unless they have a certain score on the SATs or-- One of the things we’re considering is using some other standards. One of the alternatives that Larry mentioned, that’s come out of our studies and visits from experts, is the statistics that show that students who have a certain pattern of high school courses do just as well as the student who scores a certain score on the test. So some schools are saying, “Well, look, you have this score on the test; but look at your grades in these four courses. Maybe you can start without a remedial course.”

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: That's encouraging that you would say that. So you're actually looking at the person instead of the score.

DR. YANNUZZI: But the numbers that we deal with, and the time-- See, another difficulty that we have in doing some of this kind of assessment -- we take students up until the day the classes start. If you wake up one morning, "I think I want to go to college today," we'll take you, we'll test you, we'll try to get you in courses, but there isn't as much time to do some of this kind of thing.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: When you're in the course, though, are you remediating-- As the student moves forward in the course, are you remediating in the course? Or are you saying you take the course, and if you fail the course then you can pay and take the course over again?

DR. YANNUZZI: Both those things happen, all right?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: I don't like the second one.

DR. YANNUZZI: I don't like the second one; the economics of the situation sometimes forces that and we want to get away from that. We want to have one-- I mean, my ideal -- although I'm not speaking for all 19 colleges -- should be, for some students, one remediation, 15-week experience.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Okay.

DR. YANNUZZI: There could be many other ways to address it -- while they're in high school, between the time they're in high school, or maybe simultaneous to another course that they're taking that they really want to take. Because very few people say, "I want to take remedial reading, and remedial writing, and math." But if you say, "Here's the

course. I want to be an auto mechanic;" we say, "Okay, to be an auto mechanic you have to be able to do this level of math. Take this course, take this module -- that will give you the math that you need to calculate whatever it is that you have to calculate in auto mechanics, and you can do them both at the same time." That's another approach some of the colleges are trying. All of these are ways we are trying.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Okay.

DR. NESPOLI: Just one quick question circling back to Assemblyman Cryan's good comment about standardizing. On the ACCUPLACER, unlike other states, we have standardized that test among the 19. Go to California, the community colleges use different tests, different cut scores. So all 19 community colleges in New Jersey, *a*) use the same test, same battery of tests, ACCUPLACER test; and *b*) have the same cut score as to whether you need remediation or not. And most recently we have learned, in looking at the data, that for students who are within a *decision zone*, we call it -- within, not down here (gesturing), but close to the cut score -- we do them a great service by allowing them, with proper counseling, to opt up and take college-level at the same time that they're maybe taking a remediation course. And they're better served. Because the evidence is clear: Students who are in remediation for more than a semester seldom come out of it and do well.

But on the ACCUPLACER we have used that standardized approach. I wanted you to know that.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: I appreciate that. And so anything that we can do as we move forward with any of these bills, or bills

that you would suggest, let us know because you know where we are on this.

DR. YANNUZZI: We will do that plan.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: All right, thank you very much.

Anybody else? (no response)

DR. NESPOLI: See you at Hudson.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Thank you very much.

DR. YANNUZZI: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Great. Now for the best part of the show. (laughter)

I'm going to call you up three at a time, all right?

So this is Jalina, Joyce, and Edgar. And you are all with New Jersey United Students; one says the St. Joseph's DREAMers.

Welcome.

JALINA WAYSER: Thank you.

JOYCE MARQUEZ: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: I'm looking forward to your testimony.

MS. WAYSER: Okay, thank you so much.

Thank you, Chairwoman Riley, and the board (*sic*) for allowing us to speak. My name is Jalina Wayser; I am a student here at Rowan University. I am going into my fourth year; I am a Political Science and Sociology major.

So right now New Jersey is in a higher education crisis. And that really isn't a part of a narrative right now. It's really-- We need our

formal education; we are in crisis mode. Students are being shut out of higher education and it's not acceptable.

Just to give you all a couple of statistics of what's been going on in New Jersey: The average cost of tuition is 54 percent higher than the national average -- our average tuition cost is about \$12,000, which is a \$4,000 difference than the national average, making us the 4th most expensive in the United States.

The average student in New Jersey is \$29,000 in debt; unacceptable, really, not okay. And it is evident that New Jersey is lagging behind in comparison to all of the other states in terms of higher education. Nationally, the debt crisis is at \$1.2 trillion for student debt, which is trailing the mortgage debt -- really not okay.

So students are really being shut out of higher education. Personally, I have spoken to some of you before. I come from Passaic High School, a failing school district. The average class size, when you come in as a freshman, is 600 students. Literally the first thing you are told is, "Look to the left, look to the right of you. You're not going to graduate with half the people next to you." About 200 students, on average, graduate from a beginning 600-student class, and even less of those students go into higher education.

It's really a matter of accessibility, affordability, and how many students are being shut out of our higher education system.

It's evident, but students need help, faculty needs help, administration needs help -- our colleges need help. New Jersey needs help.

So students have come up with our own solutions. You all put out a package; we have put out a package as well: the New Jersey Higher

Education Legislative Package, NJHELP. We spoke with you all before you submitted or put your package up to the press; I remember speaking with you. And students -- we gave some recommendations and what our thoughts were; that wasn't really reflected in what the package shows that you all presented to us and to the public.

So economically disadvantaged students and first generation college students -- specifically in the Educational Opportunity Fund -- need help. They need assistance in higher education. Students need tuition control on skyrocketing tuition and, just to make it really clear, I know you all have a bill on tuition control. It is not a freeze. A freeze is when you absolutely do not have tuition go up; zero percent, as Rowan has done in the last year, which is pretty awesome. What you all are offering is what I call *a lock*. You are allowing students to come in-- That's not freezing tuition; tuition is still going up. You are just locking it for a specific class. So I just want to really make that distinction with you all -- that there is a difference between a freeze and a lock, and what that terminology is and how it's going out to the public.

Students need all of the options that they have, before they go into higher education, on how to pay for school. You all have a bill for financial aid shopping; a *financial aid shopping sheet* is what we've been calling it. We do as well. So we agree on some of the things that you are putting out, but also feel that a lot of issues that students care about are being left out from your package. Undocumented students, our DREAMers, need State aid; our transgender students need to feel safe and secure on their campuses by having autonomy to change their birth certificates; and parents whose children have passed away and have NJCLASS loans should not by

mourning their children's death and paying back the loan debt -- they should be figuring out what is going on with their family rather than worrying about that.

Through the Higher Education Legislative Package, NJHELP, we have been working with a broad-based coalition of students: commuter students, veteran students, undocumented students, working-class students, LGBTQ students, and traditional and nontraditional students. We also have been backed by a professors' union, our unionized staffers, as well as having national and statewide policy organizations supporting us -- organizations such as Dómos, which is a national higher education think tank.

But what we really need is for you all to hear students out and we need to be heard.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Thank you.

EDGAR TRINIDAD: Hello, my name Edgar Trinidad, and I am part of the St. Joseph DREAMers. I graduated from here in Washington Township in 2009.

Ever since elementary school I was told by teachers I could freely choose any career I wanted. Since then, I dreamed of working for a law enforcement agency, or something along the lines, in the criminal justice field.

But all those dreams would remain dreams. My freshmen year of high school I found out that because of my status I could not pursue my dreams, and I cannot continue college. So those will be difficult. I wouldn't be able to pursue my career, and now getting to college would also

be difficult. My option now, at this point, would be to live in the shadows of fear to even try to attend school.

This bill, that was vetoed by Governor Christie, would help many DACA students -- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival -- gain access to financial aid. And how many out there are willing to serve and help our country grow that we now call home?

I, myself, was denied entry into the armed forces -- not because of my criminal record, my place of birth, or being physically fit, or excess ink on my body -- but for the simple reason of my Social Security card being marked.

These students are what President Barack Obama himself called -- "they are Americans in all aspects, but on paper." It was the youth who pushed and campaigned heavily for the in-state tuition law and will continue to strive to equality.

I still wish to pursue my childhood dream in law enforcement, but for now I plan to major in a business field to someday help expand our small family business to a very large, productive, and contributing enterprise -- maybe even corporate. I have always felt and continue to feel very much American, especially in New York where I grew up, where our Statue of Liberty stands and is a symbol of freedom in America. Our statue herself is an immigrant and yet a symbol of Americanism.

That's it; thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Thank you very much.

MS. MARQUEZ: Hi, my name is Joyce; I'm an EOF student from Rutgers University. As you know, EOF stands for Education Opportunity Fund program, which provides financial assistance and support

services for students like myself who come from both economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.

So as an EOF student I am privileged to receive numerous supports such as counseling, tutoring, student leadership development, and special course offerings -- and these are just to name a few. And the EOF counselors, professors, and staff assembled together a strong curriculum through the summer, which ensures that we experience a smooth transition from high school to college to better prepare students for the rigorous coursework that lies ahead.

These are privileged opportunities and support systems that I have never received before. My family actually moved from El Salvador in 1989 due to the civil war that killed many of my family members; but overall, in pursuit of the American dream. Although our life situation slightly improved, it was a struggle. As a child I remember living in a basement with seven other family members, and I barely saw my parents because of the long hours they had to work in the factories.

The years passed by and we moved many times because, even with the support economically from both my brother and my many sisters, we still didn't have enough money to pay the rent or the utilities. So with so many of us, my parents wondered how would they be able to afford an education? Imagine that.

Luckily my older sister heard about the EOF program. She was able to continue her education and ease my parents' worries. When I heard about the EOF I knew it was a program that I would definitely want to pursue.

Because of the Summer Institute, I was able to actively jumpstart my education at one of the many leading higher education institutions. Although my family situation is still difficult, with the support from the EOF program and, of course, my counselor, I am now able to manage work and school -- work, school, and obstacles in my life. So yes, as a 21-year-old I do have obstacles in my life, and I'm sure I'm not the only one. But I can guarantee you I am better equipped to handle them with the help of a strong support system of EOF.

I have experienced so much in the past month that without the help of my counselor and other EOF staff, who took their time to help me, I would honestly have dropped out of school due to the financial issues. And I would have been just another statistic, as you know -- all these statistics, all these people dropping out, not being able to continue with their education. I was at that very borderline, about to be one of those.

And that's why I don't want that in the future. So in the past year the Education Opportunity Fund program has seen cuts. And that is why our goal, as part of the NJHELP is to restore the \$1.9 million in Article III -- EOF grant funding: \$500,000 will be allocated to the Summer Institution, and \$1.4 million will be allocated to the academic year, which will allow a 10 percent increase in initial EOF enrollment, allowing 10 percent more students to receive the support they need in order to attend college; 10 percent more students to receive the financial assistance they need. And 10 percent more students will feel the same pride and happiness I feel knowing I still have a chance to help my parents.

And that is why I am here today to ask you -- to insist -- if you will support passing the EOF budget resolution. Every support helps me, as

a U.S. student; and hopefully, if you support the resolution for that additional 10 percent, more students who need the support. It's a huge part of me; my sister is a part; I am a part of it; and then hopefully my brother. And that's why I ask for your support for this resolution.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: I thank you for your comments.

Can I comment for this whole Committee? I think that we are all supporting that resolution.

You're absolutely right. You deserve to get a college education here, and you are an American citizen as far as I'm concerned. And we are working with you, and we will continue to work with you. You might not always get what you want, but we will always work with you.

I thank you for your testimony.

Any questions?

Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Can I? Just a couple of quick things; I'm sorry.

Joyce, first-- I'm sorry, did you--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Gabby--

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: No, go ahead, Gabby.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MOSQUERA: I'm sorry, Assemblyman.

With all due respect, I just wanted to make just one comment, and then I do have to leave. I have another commitment; I will be attending -- I'm a guest speaker at a DARE graduation for 5th graders in my District, so-- (laughter)

I just wanted to, just briefly, say I am really, really proud of all of you. And thank you so much for coming out and expressing your feelings and your concerns. And we do hear you; we want to help you.

As for the young lady and the young man, I am actually-- I have to say, when I see you, I see myself. I am an immigrant to this country; I'm a first generation college graduate student. I've been very honored, and with the push of my mom who believes in education I've been able to attain my master's degree. As a matter of fact, I had my last conversation with my mother a couple of days ago and she was wondering when I was going to get my doctorate. "It's about time," she said. (laughter) "It's about time, when are you getting your doctorate?"

So I just want to say, just as a Latina, to both of you, I am so proud of you. And please, just move forward and never give up. I was raised by a single mom with limited resources. And the only thing that my mother kept pushing -- my brothers and I -- is just to keep the American dream. And living in this country, even though freedom is not free, as we learned this past weekend on Memorial Day-- But this country does give us, and what the men and women in the military died for, is for us -- the ability to give us an opportunity. And that is what we have to grasp -- every ounce of opportunity that this country gives you.

And even though it might not be the direct route of being in law enforcement -- in your case, going a different route, becoming a man of business, or being in enterprise -- you'll never know where life will lead you; and maybe one day you will become a big person in law enforcement -- you'll earn a law enforcement career. So never give up on that, because you never know where life takes you. Being an American, being an American

citizen, living in this country -- it's all about opportunity and taking advantage of every, single thing. And I'm quoting my mother on that, and she's an immigrant from Ecuador.

So I am very proud of all of you. Thank you so much for coming out. Thank you so much for expressing your thoughts and your concerns. And I just want to say that we hear you, and we want to be here for you.

So thank you so much.

MS. WAYSER: I actually have a quick question for you, Assemblywoman Riley.

Since you are so open to meeting with students, I just want to know if we would be able to meet with you in the future, directly --students and yourself.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: My scheduler isn't here, so-- (laughter) Yes, of course.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Joyce, first off, thanks for your comments.

Let me just tell you, it's not only \$1.9 million; but let me give me at least my thoughts on how to fund that.

I look at -- one of our bills in this package is for for-profits schools. And I want to give you a couple of numbers that I think are so offensive that they should be in the public eye and the public interest.

Anybody here ever see an ad for the University of Phoenix on TV? A bazillion times? They graduate 12 percent of their students in New Jersey -- 12; like in the same amount of disciples Jesus had, all right? That's brutal. They absorb a tremendous amount of loan, EOF, and other dollars.

I don't know how to quantify it, but I will by the time we have our next hearing. To me, it seems as if, when we're looking for -- and you've heard a theme here, because you've sat here -- in terms of accountability for performance. We really haven't talked about performance-based numbers -- but looking for some accountability for dollars. And I hope that one of the things we look at here is, when it's 12 percent for the University of Phoenix, 22 percent or 23 percent for Berkeley -- 23 percent, all right? And it has been for a long, long time, okay? And it seems to me that at some point we have to pull the plug and say, "For the Joyces of the world, where there's real opportunity, where you're in institutions and opportunities for higher education that are real, and there's a real chance of success, we ought to be investing in there." That's my opinion; others may see it differently. And part of the reason we have a for-profit bill here is because we need to examine the performance of these schools, what they're doing and, quite frankly, what opportunities they're taking away from others.

And I want you to understand that, because it's \$1.9 million. I'm not going to give the woe about the budget problem. I'm on the Budget Committee, it's just amazing. But \$1.9 million in a \$34 billion budget -- I guess, these days now he's cut it -- but it seems to me to be pretty reasonable, and there's an opportunity for some funding, in my view. And we ought to cut them off until they do better.

Thanks for your inspirational speech, and the DREAMers. It's safe to say everybody up here was pretty frustrated when we dealt with the veto that came back. You take half a loaf because we've learned that you open the door, all right? You don't overcome everything in one fell swoop;

you hope you do, right? No matter what it is, you open a door and hopefully someday we all get through it together. And I hope that happens.

Just one quick one, Jalina, because you're so shy and so bashful.
(laughter)

You like the life insurance bill on the benefits, right? The one-- Not the Barnes Bill that eliminates it. I think -- is the Bill you like the DiMaio Bill on life insurance required for students? Is that correct?

MS. WAYSER: It's the Bill sponsored by Senator Beech. So it's not the life insurance, because it doesn't actually address the original--

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: It just forgives it? It's the other one? Okay.

MS. WAYSER: Yes, it's the one that actually forgives it. Because that one doesn't really address the original problem; it does, kind of, walk around the shrub of the problem.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Okay, now, because we chatted, and then I just wanted to ask you publicly about that.

Thank you for inspiring us.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Just on that particular legislation, we did have testimony on that. And so one of the solutions for that was -- so there was life insurance taken out when you got the loan so that the parents-- So no one's at a loss, let's put it that way. And that was a possible solution. We're still looking at that, okay?

MS. WAYSER: Okay, thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: You're welcome.

All right, next can we have Hanna, Oliver, and Rachel.

OLIVER GOUSHIAN: Hi, my name is Oliver Goushian. I'm a student at Camden County College. I'm also the Diversity Coordinator for New Jersey United Students, and I want to thank you all for meeting with us.

I want to talk a little bit about accessibility. There's been some discussion about it here so far. I want to talk about accessibility to the transgender and intersex community in terms of higher education in New Jersey.

Now, I don't know if you all know, but under current law, in order to get your gender changed on your birth certificate you need to have sex reassignment surgery. Not all trans people want sex reassignment surgery. It's sterilizing, it's expensive, not covered by insurance most of the time. It's been a big problem for me, personally, because for most institutions of higher education, in order to change your gender on the class registry you need to have your gender changed on your birth certificate.

This has been a big problem for me in terms of safety at my school. I face a lot of discrimination, both inside and outside of the classroom, and it puts me in a position where I have to out myself to my professors before I even hand in any work, or before they get to know me. We like to think that this type of discrimination doesn't happen, but it just does. This is a big problem for safety, and it's very much a student issue -- just in general, like an issue for the LGBTQ community.

And I just want to urge you to -- you all to consider this when you are looking over your 20-bill package.

Thank you.

Did you want to speak a little bit more about that?

HANNA ROTHENBERG: Sure.

All right, so I'm Hanna Rothenberg; I'm a student at Rowan University. I'm the Secretary for New Jersey United Students.

First, I'd like to thank the Committee for listening to my concerns.

As President of LUCY/Vox Feminist Club on campus, I recognize that securing women's safety and rights on par with those of men on campus is critical in creating an environment where all students are safe in their identity and confident in their ability to achieve.

The proposed 20-bill package -- it does make great strides in terms of creating a financially and socially stable college, but it does not address any of the threatening issues to women on campuses; for example, peer and institutional responses to changes in orientation, in identity, or instances of sexual assault.

So first I'm going to speak more on Bill A-2659, which is what Oliver discussed, which is the transgender and intersex identity bill. And I'm discussing it because transmisogyny, which is the transgender form of sexism, is a women's issue. I'm also discussing it because it's part of the higher education legislative package -- NJHELP -- and as Oliver said, it allows transgender people to change their birth certificate to reflect their change in gender without having to undergo sex reassignment surgery to change their certificate.

So some people question why would transgender people not wish to undergo the surgery. First of all, the procedure is really costly. On average, it's \$60,000. And second, some transgender people do not identify that way. And I think the people-- The reason the people are even raising

these questions is because there's this lack of healthy and accurate visibility for transgender people to greater society. And this simple institutional recognition would work towards that.

In terms of logistics, the cost would be on the person seeking to change their certificate, and they would have to provide clinical evidence of their transition.

As you know, formerly Governor Christie vetoed this because people seeking to legally change their birth certificate, he believed, could be committing fraud. But gender as a vehicle for fraud on legal documents has not raised concerns and, indeed, Governor Christie did not specify why or how people would use this to commit fraud. And in analogous form, the DMV already allows people to change gender markers on any documents involving gender, and no issues of fraud have been raised. Implementing such a procedure in other government institutions would be very similar.

I would also like to speak on A-2118, which has been introduced to the Assembly. It allows the Secretary of Higher Education, who is currently Ms. Rochelle Hendricks, to pose a \$10,000 fine on an institute of higher education that has inadequately handled complaints of sexual violence and harassment. And this fine would be in addition to appropriate disciplinary action.

This is an important step towards accountability for colleges. They have to resolve the physical and psychological damage that sexual violence leaves on students. There have been questions raised about this impact being adequate, but the \$10,000 is enough of a fee to weight on colleges, while not being so heavy that they fear taking any action. Deliberate inaction has long been a problem with colleges -- when they

don't respond to claims of assault due to bureaucratic interests, for example, to keep numbers of assault cases low. This is not only a women's issue; we believe that it's a human rights issue, and it should be implemented on college campuses where people are learning to become responsible adults.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: I just want to speak to the particular bills that you were speaking to.

MS. ROTHENBERG: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: We just had a Committee hearing on that one particular bill -- 2118, all right? And we will be doing some floor amendments on that, so we will be increasing the fine; we're going to make the accountability to the Attorney General's Office, not to the Secretary of Higher Education, all right? So there will be things that will be a little bit different; we're trying to make it stronger.

The other one, 2689, I have to take a look at that. I don't have that one particularly in front of me.

And to the birth certificate one -- I felt like we did that legislation last session, and it possibly made it to the Governor's desk.

MS. ROTHENBERG: He vetoed it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: He vetoed it.

And so it will probably go through again; it is an important issue.

Now we'll listen to your testimony.

RACHEL STORCH: Hello. My name is Rachel Storch. I'm a proud Rowan University student -- go, Profs. Sorry, I had to work it in.

(laughter) And when I'm not a student, I am the President of the New Jersey United Students.

I come here today not to harpoon on the issues that my other colleagues are talking about, because they're all really important; but I'd like to talk about the issue of shared governance. Shared governance is the idea that students have equal decision-making power on all spins of the issues of higher education. This includes faculty hiring, tuition increases, any piece of legislation that relates to student. We think it's important that students have the right to make these decisions, as we are the ones who are directly affected by these issues.

Students pay more than half of the revenue for colleges; it comes off tuitions. I think that the amount at Rowan is 66 percent. And this is a huge issue -- that we don't have the right to say where our tuition dollars are going because we are the ones paying for mostly everything.

States like Wisconsin have state statutes -- specifically, 36.09, and then little brackets, 5, in case anyone wants to write it down and research it. It basically states that students have the legal right, and they need to be in these decision-making processes. So when it comes to president hirings, students are at the table -- and an equal amount of students. Not just one student reporting to represent the whole body, but six administrators, six students. That is what we want, that is what we require, and that is what is necessary.

A lack of shared governance is evident in today's higher education climate. This can be seen through legislation that gets passed or proposed that is not student-centered; rather, focuses on solving these issues

but doesn't communicate to the students on how they want to solve the issues.

You have questions, we have answers. We are on the ground, we experience it. We can answer all of the questions that you have on remedial courses. Ask us, "Why do you need remedial courses? What would make it easier?" We'd love to answer these questions; we'd literally love to. That would bring us joy. (laughter)

It can also be seen in university administrations (*sic*) who are getting hired, and not necessarily are getting asked -- students -- if we support their hiring or not. At Rowan -- not to throw shade, I love Rowan - - there was an administrator hired who was focused purely on restructuring the way that students choose classes. And yet, we still have issues with choosing classes. If students were able to be at that table to be able to decide what administrators will be hired, we'd be able to dictate what their position would entail, how they would communicate with students, what they would be doing, and this would benefit us as a whole because we would be able to solve these issues before they become such a big crisis. And yes, New Jersey's in a crisis, as people have mentioned. We're 47th in the nation for higher education funding. So if students are at the table with Legislators, being able to talk to you all, being like, "Hey, maybe we should fund this; maybe this is a great alternate source of revenue," and just recommendations that I think would help us-- Because you all are taking the initiative in taking the first step -- and I really, wholeheartedly appreciate that. I don't want this to come off as attacking. I appreciate that you all are proposing a 20-bill package that would help alleviate the costs of accessibility and affordability.

But it's only a first step. It's a Band-Aid on a gushing head wound. There are a lot of problems. And I think another recommendation would be having these roundtable discussions maybe during the school year, perhaps -- coming down to different college campuses. Right now there are no students on campus; the only ones here are taking summer courses, which is not equal to how many people normally live here. So I think it would be interesting, and cool, and very informative, and work well for both of us if these discussions could happen during the school year as well.

And again, I just want to thank you again for taking the effort -- Assemblyman Cryan, driving down from Elizabeth. I grew up in Hillside, so, yeah -- coming down here to see. And we can't wait to see what student-centered policies together we can come up with and work, brainstorm.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: All right. Thank you very much for your testimony.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Can we ask her one question?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Yes, absolutely.

MS. STORCH: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: So what are your thoughts on remedial?

MS. STORCH: To be quite honest, I haven't had a chance to sit down and look at it. I came from-- I was privileged enough to come from a good school district and didn't have to take any remedial classes. But reaching out to students who are affected by remedial courses would be a good way to understand.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: So let me ask you a favor.

MS. STORCH: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: You're on the ground, and you guys are clearly active. Not today, but take a look at it, talk to folks. If it's not tomorrow, it's at some point in the future -- give a call and let's talk.

MS. STORCH: For sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Okay, fair enough?

MS. STORCH: I'd love to.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Thank you. Thanks a lot guys, thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: All right, thank you.

Our last group -- Timothy, Ephraim, Alex, and Justin.

Welcome.

TIMOTHY KYLE: Thank you.

Good afternoon, Committee. It's a pleasure to be here. I thank you for allowing me the chance to speak.

My name is Timothy Kyle, and I'm an incoming student at Middlesex County Community College; I'm also a first generation student, and a nontraditional student.

I'm here to speak about the detrimental effects of tuition locks on public universities. With the rising costs of tuition, we are seeking a fundamental change to the current trend of colleges and universities operating costs being placed on students rather than the State. Currently in A-2807, there is no way to stem the rising cost of tuition for each new incoming class. The effects have usually been in the negative, as State appropriations are dwindling and public institutions will have no choice but to raise tuition exponentially to each new incoming class. Furthermore, it is

an unreasonable attempt at pushing students to graduate faster, giving them protection for only nine semesters. It's unrealistic for many students -- particularly those who must work significant hours to pay for college -- to finish in four years. And students who pursue study abroad, double majors, and other educational enrichments often take more than eight or nine semesters to graduate.

As it stands, we the students believe it would be in the positive if we were to implement a tuition cap linked to CPI rather than a tuition lock. Right now, the CPI is at 1.5 percent -- and I know Assemblywoman Pinkin has introduced a bill that would cap it at 4 percent, but that's more than double the CPI. So right now, as the bill stands, it would not actually stem the cost of tuition placed on students.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Cool, man; thanks.

So you're in favor of some sort of price control -- whether it's a freeze, or whether it's a cap -- you agree that the costs are escalating and, therefore, there should be some sort of-- We procedurally agree that there should be some sort of controls.

MR. KYLE: Either a cap or a freeze -- not a lock. A lock would be detrimental to students.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I didn't really catch the freeze and lock thing. Like, to me, it's a nomenclature. You get nine semesters at the same price point you came in with -- when you come out. And the idea is to incentivize both the student and the school for completion. This is all about the path to graduation.

You like it at 1.5, it sounds like -- or whatever the CPI is. Is that correct?

MR. KYLE: Correct.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Okay. Let me just share a fact with you that you may like, you may not like. I use this stuff in my District, so that nobody takes (indiscernible).

I have Kean University in my District, right? They tell me that a good rule is to have 7 percent of your debt be in your operating budget. They tell me that that's the right number for New Jersey. Susan Cole told us that number, as a matter of fact. Kean University's is 13 percent. Their debt is almost north of \$400 million, and their bond rating is A2-negative, with a negative outlook and a declining enrollment. Nobody gets to say no to them -- nobody. The Board of Trustees decides they want to build another building, whether it's empty or not, they just get to build it, and nobody says no. You get to eat that as a student. If you want to go from Middlesex to Kean -- which, by the way, Middlesex County is the second-largest county provider to that school -- so if you chose to do that, you'd eat that cost.

Part of the reason for a freeze -- or those sorts of things -- is to make folks think about the long-term of that. The cost of a freeze in any given year, we think -- these are the numbers out of LD 20, Joe Cryan; not OLS, not verified, I want to emphasize that to the 8,000th degree -- is about \$8 million, if you take tuition increases per year. I heard Dr. Ali talk before about managing expenses versus revenue, and being able to hire 64 faculty, when I see layoffs at other higher ed institutions.

So we may fundamentally disagree on whether it should be a freeze or not; but from the factors I've seen so far, and from the out-of-control I see in terms of some of this spending, I think a freeze makes folks

take a good look. And I like the idea of nine semesters versus eight; I mean, you voted-- You didn't vote for me, I doubt.

MR. KYLE: No. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I don't think you live in my District. That's why you're in higher ed. But for the folks who did, what they're looking for is an analytical approach. With the freeze -- or zero, so to speak -- it allows families to budget; and also, by the way, allows -- makes schools have to look at their out-of-year budget projections. Because part of the bill requires that they provide the next year's budget projections, which currently, right now, doesn't happen a whole lot.

So I think we're on the same thematic idea, which is price controls. But I want to let you know, for a variety of reasons, why I support a freeze -- because I think a family can do it versus CPI. All you need is one guy to close the Strait of Hormuz, and gas goes to \$6 tomorrow and you'll see what inflation looks like. And by the way, that will never come down; once it goes up it never comes down. So I kind of like the stability of a freeze, and I thought you were entitled to know that, as the sponsor of the Bill, as to what some of the process was.

Because I every much appreciate-- You were at the other hearing too.

MR. KYLE: Correct.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: And I am very, very grateful for that.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Next.

E P H R A I M H U S S A I N: Hello, my name is Ephraim Hussain. I am a Montclair State University graduate student enrolled in the teacher education program.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Nice.

MR. HUSSAIN: I would like to thank the Higher Ed Committee for hearing all our testimonies today. I'm going to speak on the tuition cap bill currently being prime-sponsored by Senator Weinberg -- which is currently in formulation -- which prohibits four-year public institutions from increasing resident undergraduate tuition by more than the CPI.

This bill is by no means a long-term panacea to the rising costs of public higher education in the Garden State. However, it does represent a first step towards making it more accessible and affordable.

It is a fact that New Jersey's four-year public universities are the 4th most expensive in the United States. This unrelenting rise in costs continues to make college a progressively worse deal with each passing year -- especially for low-income students.

As tuition and fees continue to rise at exponential rates across the country, the purchasing power of the Pell grant and other forms of need-based aid is falling like a lead balloon. Consider that 40 years ago a needy student's Pell Grant could potentially cover over 75 percent of the cost of attending a four-year public university; today it barely covers 30 percent.

In New Jersey, most need-based aid lags behind actual tuition levels by two years and, in some cases, up to four years. While not solving this evolving trend, a hard cap will reduce its rate of progression. It is

important, however, that this tuition cap does not result in reduced educational quality. According to researchers with the University of California-Berkeley's *Debt & Society Project*, the driving force behind the rising cost of higher education in this country relates to expenditures which have little to do with what should be the sole primary mission of the public university: providing high-quality undergraduate education.

The fact is that universities, both in New Jersey and across the country, have been financing amenities such as lavish recreation centers, dining halls, and athletics through massive amounts of debt obtained through bond markets, driving up the cost of higher education.

It's time for these reckless, unsavory, and self-serving practices to stop, and New Jersey United Students believes this tuition cap is a first step towards achieving that goal.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Go.

A L E X U E M A T S U: Hello, my name is Alex Uematsu. I am a Rutgers University student, as well as the Legislative and Governmental Affairs Chair of New Jersey United Students.

So today I'm going to speak on the legislation A-2802, which would allow credits earned at a four-year university to transfer to a community college to go towards the earning of an associate's degree. This Bill is also known by the *Reverse Transfer Agreement* name,

And I would like to start off by saying that New Jersey United Students supports this legislation and will throw our weight behind it.

So we support this because it would directly and positively affect the thousands of students who began their education at a four-year university but had to drop out due to a myriad of reasons -- most commonly

financial, but also personal, family, and other reasons. So I'll just throw in a statistic here: Over 1 in 5 students who drop out cite financial reasons as the cause, and this is clearly unacceptable.

So as a personal example, I've had friends in the Educational Opportunity Fund program who have had to leave Rutgers University due to their aid being cut in the middle of their education. And that's something that happens all across these programs.

So please ask yourselves: Does that sound like educational opportunity to you? So clearly a reverse transfer agreement would go towards ameliorating some of the detrimental effects of cost raises and lowered financial aid. But this is only the first step towards having true educational opportunity, which for us students means free and universal higher education that is a right and not a privilege.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Thank you very much.

MR. UEMATSU: Just one second. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Oh, I thought you were done.

MR. UEMATSU: If a student cannot complete their education at a four-year university and they have to drop out -- especially due to financial reasons -- they have typically accumulated significant student debt. Many of these students who had to drop out due to financial reasons are, of course, the underprivileged and underserved students who cannot afford -- due to their family bank accounts, and family jobs, and things like that -- to pay the continuously rising costs of higher ed.

So to sum up, New Jersey United Students urges this Committee to post and approve A-2802 as soon as possible, so that the students who were not able to finish their education through no fault of

their own can go back and achieve an associate's degree -- something that should be, but is sadly not, a right.

So thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Thank you.

Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: He just made your day.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: I know; you just did. You made my day.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: You just made her day.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: That's my-- (laughter)

J U S T I N H A B L E R: Hello, my name is Justin Habler. I am currently a Policy Advisor at New Jersey United States.

So I just recently graduated Rutgers-New Brunswick -- just about one week ago. (applause) Thank you, thank you.

The only thing is, though, I now have \$10,000 in debt.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: In six months you'll start paying. (laughter)

MR. HABLER: Yes, exactly. I just got that e-mail from Sallie Mae the other day.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: That's right.

MR. HABLER: So what I wanted to talk about is, I understand that this Committee is focused, with this higher education package, on cost-effective ways to mitigate the true costs of higher education -- so things that don't cost the State money. And we, as New Jersey United Students, generally support things that don't cost money that can fix higher education.

Civically, I would like to talk today about A-2817 and dual enrollment programs. So I myself was part of a dual enrollment program when I was in high school. And if it were not for that dual enrollment program I would not have graduated. I was exactly 0.5 credits above what I needed to be. Without those 3 credits I gained in high school I would not be graduating.

So we have a lot of focus on graduation rates, as I've seen in the legislative package that you all are doing. So what I am here to say is that we want to collaborate. We don't want to just come here and speak with you through this microphone; we want to come and talk to you as not only individuals, but as humans who are striving together to actually fix these issues in our society that are plaguing us.

So I guess my question to you, now I can get all of you engaged, is how can we collaborate? We do not want to be simply the students yelling outside the building. We do not simply want to be the students coming and sitting at the table in front of the microphone. We want to be the students who are working with you -- not only outside, but inside as well, in the Legislature.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Well, what you're doing now is actually collaboration also. And you can schedule appointments with each and every one of us and your fellow Legislators, okay? It's not just us, all right? It's your representatives in government you can also be working with.

Coming to the State House, being prepared, having your arguments for why something needs to be taken care of is exactly -- you're in the process. So just because you're sitting at a table at a hearing -- this is

what we're doing, this is how things get taken care of. It's not that we don't hear you -- we hear you.

But make appointments; do whatever you want to do to get involved. What you did prior to when we got here was great. I think that people are hearing you. You're talking to the press, you're writing letters -- that's government. Good work.

MR. HABLER: Thank you. And two more things I want to mention, really quickly, before we wrap this all up.

Firstly, when you look at the students here you should know that this isn't just us. We have students across the state; we actually have thousands and thousands of students who all have the exact same interests of having affordable and accessible education. It may be that we have only 20 students with us today, but don't forget that we're actually thousands in numbers.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: And I appreciate that. Listen, when you look at us, we were all students -- most of us -- that had to pay student loans. And we are also parents who are paying our children's student loans back, okay? So we understand the plight, and we are all in this together.

So thank you very much.

MR. HABLER: And on that note, of us being in this together, we are looking to have a press conference on June 12. We were wondering if you could possibly come with us and speak as to the issues of higher education. I understand that you are probably going to tell me, "Go talk to my staffer," because that's exactly what I should do.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: Yes.

MR. HABLER: Absolutely. But I wanted to know -- is this something that you are interested, genuinely, in doing?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: We'll talk later, but this is what I will tell you -- is that most of us work full-time; we are a part-time Legislature.

MR. HABLER: I see.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: So we don't have a lot of that-- It's not like I say, "I'm willing to do it"-- But I have a job that I actually have to go through and say, "Can I have this day off to do this extra thing?" All right?

MR. HABLER: Okay, thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: You're welcome.

MR. HABLER: We appreciate this. And just to echo the rest of the students -- not only here, but in the state -- we need our student voices heard. That's all.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN RILEY: All right. I thank you.

Is there anyone else who wanted to testify today? (no response)

All right, I thank you very much. This was a very informative hearing; I appreciate everyone and the effort that they extended today. And I wish you a great rest of the day.

Thank you so much. This meeting is adjourned.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)