



## **The City University of New York Transparency Plan**

The City University of New York (the “University” or “CUNY”) is a public instrumentality established in 1961 by combining into one university a number existing educational institutions, which have their origins in The City of New York. The University is governed by a 17 member board of trustees, 10 of whom are appointed by the Governor of The State of New York, five of whom are appointed by the Mayor of The City of New York and two of whom are the ex-officio chairs of the University Faculty Senate and the University Student Senate. The oldest educational institution within the University system is The City College of New York, which was founded in 1847. Each of the colleges is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and all their educational programs are authorized by the Regents of the University of the State of New York and are registered with the New York State Education Department. In addition, other appropriate professional, educational and institutional associations accredit many of the individual colleges, schools and programs within CUNY. As a condition to this continuing accreditation, the University is also required to be transparent and provide to such oversight organizations statistical data and information, information about the integrity of academic offerings and evidence of compliance with relevant state and federal regulations.

The University’s mission is to provide broad access to higher education of the highest quality to the people of the City. CUNY comprises 11 senior colleges (the “Senior Colleges”), seven community colleges (the “Community Colleges”) and seven graduate, honors and professional schools. During the fall of 2021 approximately 178,619 students were enrolled in academic programs offered at Senior College campuses located throughout the five boroughs of the City.

## **I. Review of University's Current Public Engagement**

### **A. Steps taken to review CUNY's policies and procedures on transparency.**

#### **(i) Policies, Plans and Procedures.**

The University on a regular basis reviews its policies, procedures, governance plans and codes of conduct impacting faculty, staff and students. Most recently, the University embarked on a nearly year-long process review and update its Title IX policies in an effort to comply with changes to the federal regulation. The review process involved an inclusive and collaborative process led by the University's Office of General Counsel in consultation with the University's Office of Risk, Audit and Compliance and the University Office of Human Resources Management. Additionally, the University reviewed and amended its retirement plans and policies to comply with recent changes in federal regulations which were promulgated as a result the COVID-19 public health emergency. Additionally, the University's Board of Trustees has established a Governance Committee, which has as its primary charge to review and update the University's By-Laws and Manual of General Policy. All such changes to University's By-Laws and Manual of General Policy are approved by the University's Board of Trustees in open meetings of the Board of Trustees after committee review and discussion and calendared for a public meeting. Similarly, changes to college governance plans, which are from time to time proposed, are presented to and approved by the University's Board of Trustees in open meetings.

#### **(ii) University efforts to increase transparency.**

The University has historically used its website, social media platforms, e-mail and CUNYTV, along with the websites and digital platforms of its 25 colleges to communicate with its constituencies. The University recently launched the [cuny.edu/coronavirus](https://cuny.edu/coronavirus) page in March 2, 2020, a repository of critical information for the University community, including the #VaxUpCUNY campaign, details and deadlines on the CUNY vaccine mandate for students and more recently the CUNY COVID-19 Safety Tracker, a weekly report on COVID-19 testing by campus.

CUNY has five social media channels, and uses Reddit and Discord to share updates, information, resources and stories about the CUNY community with the general public, students, faculty and staff. These platforms have an audience of 244,000 followers; our audiences grew by

320% in the last two years; and we are reaching an average of two million users every month. We work closely with the social media staff at all 25 colleges to curate, collect and share information about individual campuses and University-wide campaigns. In addition, we work with our colleges to share best social media practices and offer social media training to those who need it. Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez also utilizes three social media accounts to disseminate official University updates to his 13,000+ followers.

Twice a week, CUNY emails the latest news and information to 350,000 members of the CUNY community via the CUNY Brief newsletter. Through this platform, we are able to reach our community with a more digestible presentation, while ensuring that the most pressing updates, announcements, and notices are proactively messaged straight to their inboxes.

Other current and historical data publicized include the following for each of CUNY's institutions:

*Student Related*

*Admissions data*

*The number and types of degrees granted*

*Enrollment statistics*

*Student Race/Ethnicity demographics*

*Institutional and system student retention and graduation rates*

*Data on the utilization of CUNY's SEEK/College Discovery opportunity programs*

*Data on enrollment & degrees granted in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math ("STEM") disciplines*

*The profile of its students by demographic category*

*The results of the CUNY Student Experience Survey and CUNY Alumni Survey*

*Budget and Finance Reports*

*CUNY's audited financial statements from FY2006 through present*

*CUNY's operating budget allocations (historical)*

*The detailed analysis of CUNY's state and city appropriations*

*CUNY's Annual Budget Request*

*Executive Search and Evaluation*

*Information on current searches for college presidents and deans and university vice chancellors, including progress reports*

*Office of Human Resources Management*

*Staff Facts—data on CUNY's workforce broken down by demographics such as race, ethnicity, and gender*

*Public Safety*

*Jeanne Clery Act Campus Crime Statistics—These are annual reports required by the US Department of Education for all institutions receiving Title IV funding, and they provide a detailed breakdown of crimes that occurred on a CUNY campus or facility over a three-year period and also provide important security and safety policy statements.*

*Legal Affairs*

*Detailed information on how to gain access to CUNY's records under the Freedom of Information Law ("FOIL")*

**B. University efforts to increase participation in the community and interact with the public.**

**(i) Community Engagement**

The University has a number of programs across its 25 campuses within the five boroughs that perform outreach and seek to build academic bridges and opportunities for students living in The City of New York. CUNY's Citizenship Now! has a robust program of community outreach on immigration law issues, providing attorneys to speak to community groups and holding Facebook Live sessions where community members can ask questions. For the most recent full year for which we have data, July 1, 2020 to June 21, 2021, we participated in 17 community presentations, and held 13 Facebook Live sessions. In all cases, we advise the audience of the relationship between CUNY Citizenship Now! and CUNY, using these sessions to help us evaluate and improve our work.

In addition, CUNY broadcasts through CUNY TV (available on the following channels: NYC Metro 25.3, Spectrum/Optimum 75, RCN 77 and Verizon FiOS 30) which provides unique community focused programming that is often curated directly from the neighborhoods and communities in which our students live and work. The University also is engaged throughout the year in various civic partnerships, including providing student support and service in connection with the recent federal census, voter registration and voter participation. The University's campuses, facilities and gyms are open to our communities for performing arts events, voter registration, vaccination and other health and educational programs on an annual basis.

All members of the University leadership are encouraged to engage the communities in which our school and colleges are located. All of our college and school presidents serve on boards and participate in organizations, which seek to improve the quality of the lives of students the University serves. Additionally, members of the chancellery have a history of experience volunteering and serving the public sector. The University's Chancellor in particular, Dr. Matos Rodríguez, has used his extensive regional and national networks and board memberships to advance the visibility and recognition of CUNY. A member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Chancellor sits on the governing board of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU). In 2021, he joined the board of the Association for a Better New York (ABNY) and was named co-chair of the New York City Regional Economic Development Council (NYCREDC). He also serves on the boards of Phipps Houses and the United Way of New York City, and he is a member of the Research Alliance for New York City Schools steering committee. In 2020, the Chancellor was named by the American Council on Education (ACE) to a national task force focused on improving transfer of credit practices and to

New York City's Education Sector Advisory Council, which is to guide the reopening of schools and other aspects of the city's pandemic response.

**(ii) Public Meetings and Hearings and Public Comment**

The University's Board of Trustees meets six times a year. The meetings of the Board of Trustees of The City University of New York are open to the public, and the Board welcomes the interest of those who attend. The public has ample opportunity to communicate with the Board of Trustees. Public hearings on the Board of Trustees' policy calendar are scheduled one week prior to the Board's regular meetings, and members of the public who wish to communicate with the Board of Trustees are invited to express their views at such public hearings.

The University Board of Trustees holds additional public hearings each year in all of the five boroughs at which members of the public may also speak. In addition, written communications to the University Board of Trustees are distributed to all members of the Board.

**C. University Response to Freedom of Information ("FOIL") Requests and Public Records**

**(i) FOIL**

CUNY and its campuses receive numerous FOIL requests related to University projects and educational programs in addition to requests from media outlets for additional information related to stories appearing in the press.

The University's Central Administration Office and all of its campus-based Records Access Officers will continue to track their FOIL requests and comply with all statutorily-mandated deadlines. Records Access Officers are trained to process multiple requests at the same time and commence working on more complicated matters, while simultaneously responding to more straightforward ones. This protocol minimizes any potential backlogs or bottlenecks and enables CUNY to respond to each request within a reasonable period of time as permitted by law depending on the nature and quantity of the records sought.

Appeals are handled in a timely manner, and CUNY makes every effort to publicize information, when it is able to, on its websites to reduce the need for repeated FOIL requests. CUNY will review repeated requests as they come in to determine if there is additional information that can be posted on CUNY's website. The University has and will continue to conduct training sessions for campus-based Records Access Officers to ensure continued, timely compliance with the Freedom of Information Law.

(ii) **Public Records**

CUNY continuously updates its records retention policies as needed and is currently seeking a new Records Management Specialist with new responsibilities for FOIL compliance.

All CUNY records are retained in accordance with the retention periods and guidelines specified in the CUNY Records Retention and Disposition Schedule ("Schedule") and in any related policies, procedures, guidelines, or directives that CUNY has issued or may issue in the future. The Schedule was adapted from the *Records Retention and Disposition Schedule MI-1* issued in 2006 by the State Archives program of the New York State Education Department pursuant to Section 57.25 of the Arts and Cultural Affairs Law and Part 185, Title 8 of the *Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York*.

In the adaptation process, a great many items in *Schedule MI-1* were deleted because of their inapplicability to CUNY, and most of the remaining items in *Schedule MI-1* were edited so that they would be more accessible to the CUNY community. The State Archives requires that the retention periods for items prescribed in *Schedule MI-1* may not be shortened. In a number of cases, however, CUNY determined it appropriate to lengthen the retention periods in *Schedule MI-1* for particular items on the Schedule. The Schedule was approved by the State Archives' Government Records Services pursuant to 8 NYCRR 185.5(c).

**D. Proposed Efforts to Expand University Transparency and Expected Timeline**

The University and its constituent schools and colleges are constantly looking for new and innovative ways to communicate with its students, faculty and staff. The COVID-19 public health emergency has encouraged the University to better utilize social media, such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, to push information, and create safe spaces in which to communicate with the University community.

The University will also continue to build community partnerships and collaborations in the arts, music, theater and journalism to provide exposure and opportunity of University offerings, student talent and community engagement. As The City of New York recovers from the recent COVID-19 public health emergency, so too will the University's efforts to engage, share and collaborate with the University's constituents.

## **E. Measures of Success and Long-term Monitoring**

As a public instrumentality, the University must be a responsible steward of public funds and utilize every cost effective, efficient means to improve, promote and maintain communications with its constituents. The University takes this responsibility seriously, and the University will seek to work with diverse, innovative and creative service providers, vendors, and interested partners to create such platforms for such engagement. Such efforts will include the continued effort to procure minority and women owned business enterprise services and products to meet the University's needs. Likewise, the University will annually make a self-assessment and evaluate its investment in its transparency efforts and hold itself accountable to the highest standards of ethical and responsible conduct.