

REMARKS BY CHERYL L. HYMAN
CITY CLUB OF CHICAGO
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Thank you Jay and good afternoon to all of you. I would like to thank three people for their support: my Board Chair Paula Wolff and Vice Chair Ellen Alberding, and Beth Swanson, Mayor Emanuel's Deputy Chief of Staff for education. All three have helped see me through thick and thin.

It is customary to start these speeches with a politically correct joke. One of the best pieces of advice I've ever received is: Find something you don't do well, and don't do it. So, moving along, I will start with a pop quiz instead.

This is an actual quiz question I saw students work on at Daley College on the southwest side a few weeks ago as part of what the teacher called "Math Jeopardy."

Because of my own City Colleges science training, it took me about ten seconds to get to the answer, but I will be generous and give you the fifteen seconds it took one of my staffers who was a humanities major. Here it goes. This one was for 300.

OK, time's up. Anybody have the answer?

Here is the answer:

The adult ticket cost 20 dollars.
And the child's ticket cost \$10.

If you got the answer right, congratulations, you would be doing well in one of our pre-credit, remedial algebra classes. If you didn't, you can inquire about our adult education courses at www.ccc.edu.

Let's see how the two students who volunteered to answer the question approached the problem. Both of them got the answer right, but only one of them solved the problem using the equation taught in the class, which would have allowed her to replicate the finding even if the problem had involved much more complex numbers.

First, here is our collective reconstitution of how the first student showed her work.

Now, here is the actual work of a female student named Ahnateeyah who methodically and rigorously reached her conclusion.

This slide also shows us the way forward to ensure City Colleges of Chicago delivers on the promise of opening the door to jobs and further education to our students.

Before we get to that, let me show you one last equation that encapsulates why Mayor Emanuel when he renewed my mandate for change told me – and I quote – to “double down”:

These were some of City Colleges' key statistics when I took office two years ago:

90 is the percentage of incoming students needing remediation, in other words, who are not ready for college.

54 is the percentage of students who drop out after 15 credit hours, or the equivalent of 1 semester.

7 was the graduation rate when I became Chancellor.

R is the need for Reinvention, our first-in-the-nation comprehensive effort under which faculty, students and staff help reform the institution to make it truly student-centered and driven solely by student outcomes, rooted in accountability, transparency and excellence.

The goals of Reinvention are common-sense objectives, yet they were truly radical and even almost revolutionary on our campuses when we articulated them two years ago.

First and foremost among them is to ensure our students leave with credentials of economic value, meaning their degrees have value to four year colleges and employers alike.

We just published the second chapter of our efforts to document the progress of Reinvention, which you received when you arrived. Here is an update on some of our vitals, some of which have been gathered since that document was printed:

Our graduation rate is up 3% from when I arrived as Chancellor.

Today it is 10%, the highest in more than a decade.

All the while, we have saved \$41 million through the elimination of inefficiencies and redundancies.

We still have a long way to go, but there are clear signs of progress.

One of the first challenges we tackled was boosting readiness.

The fact 90 percent of our incoming students are not college-ready – more than twice the national rate – is an indictment of our secondary system. Notice I did not say “Chicago Public Schools,” because it is too easy and convenient to assume this is solely a CPS issue. Just under 75

percent of our students come from CPS, so the problem is not limited to public schools.

It is for this reason that Mayor Emanuel has repeatedly stressed that education reform in Chicago must address the issues plaguing both CPS and City Colleges, given how inter-dependent our two systems are.

JC and I have a dedicated team that meets weekly. Our dual credit and dual enrollment initiatives with CPS allow students to gain key academic experience at the college level but also, just as important, to acclimate to a college campus while still in high school, ensuring they are more successful bridging to post-secondary settings, whether it is at CCC or elsewhere. We have doubled the size of our dual enrollment program, which will allow more than 2,000 CPS students a year to earn college credit while in high school.

We are rethinking remediation across our seven colleges.

Let me be clear here, we never did and would never think of eliminating remedial education.

But in many ways, remediation cheats students of time and money, and it cheats taxpayers, who have to pay twice for someone to get a 12th grade education. Our wonderful faculty is not to blame – we have to make sure we get our students prepared for what's next when they get to us, and ensure they get through more successfully and quicker.

Another key goal is to identify those so-called remediation students who are on the cusp like Ahnateeyah and, with the proper support and monitoring, can be put in credit courses alongside their college-ready peers.

Those students for whom remediation is unavoidable are getting a whole new level of help, with promising results.

Our Reinvention team developed a free summer bridge program called Level UP that provides students with an intensive refresher in math and English. Level UP reduced the time spent in remediation by 1.2 semesters on average. Overall, 94% of participants experienced at least one level gain in English and 57% of students experienced level gains in math.

Across the board in English and math, participants were successful at more than twice the rate of non-participants. A lot of the credit for this success goes to two of our faculty members serving on our Reinvention taskforces, Jewel Younge of Olive-Harvey College and Rowena Misaya of Daley College, who exemplify how so much of Reinvention is driven by those who know best: our faculty and our students.

Then there is retention...

That more than half of our students vanish before the end of their freshman year is only in part due to lack of adequate preparation. Simply put, we must do a better job supporting students and articulating a clear, achievable academic and professional pathway. It's easy to get discouraged when you are left to wander without a clear goal and anyone urging you to forge ahead. We must boost retention.

That's why we have cut our student-to-advisor ratio in half from 920-to-1 in 2011 to 450-to-1 in 2012, to ensure students get the guidance and support that lead to degrees and employment, and why we plan to hire more.

We also brought on 120 tutors in core subjects, nearly tripling the number of specialists available to ensure our students get the extra help they need and deserve.

One of our driving principles is that life doesn't have to get in the way of a CCC education.

For many of our students, the most daunting obstacles are emotional and basic needs we all take for granted, such as food, housing and access to healthcare.

To that end, CCC has launched fully staffed Wellness Centers this spring at each college to provide short-term counseling, referrals to community resources – including psychological care, housing, medical, food, child care and legal services – and student success trainings and workshops, such as stress and time management skills, test taking and learning disability assessments. Through March, for instance, more than 1,500 have received individual counseling, 200 have been active in support groups and several dozen have been referred for psychological and other services. This too was the brainchild of a faculty member as part of Reinvention, Roberta Bole, one of our adjunct professors.

It's not because they experience some of those life issues that the students are not academically equipped.

You may know I was a high school dropout with a difficult family life whose trajectory was changed with the help of some loving friends and relatives, but also the dedication of faculty at Olive-Harvey College, which sent me on my way to IIT for a bachelor's, North Park University for a Master's, Northwestern University for an MBA and a career as an executive at ComEd.

The new president of Olive-Harvey, Craig Follins, himself went from a GED to a PhD after a similar story that included a stint in the army to break with some bad choices in a rough New York neighborhood and even at one point being asked to leave community college he attended.

The fact many of us in leadership at City Colleges have walked a mile in our students' shoes informs our approach to supporting them.

We understand we cannot allow our students' problems to be used as an excuse for the fact our students may not reach their full potential.

In tandem with our drive to boost retention is our effort to boost the relevance of our programs through our College to Careers initiative, which Mayor Emanuel launched in December.

Let me be clear, we do not have a labor and jobs shortage so much as we have a skills shortage.

Today 100,000 jobs are going unfilled in Chicagoland because of a skills-to-jobs mismatch. Which is another way of saying there's a mismatch between what employers need and what we teach.

Our answer is to partner with industry leaders to design the curriculum needed to train our students for success in high-growth, high-wage fields, and provide students with access to teacher-practitioners, internships and the latest technologies, as well as a first shot at job interviews.

The idea is simple: Get the skills, get the job.

It is high time we stop demonizing vocational training. Getting the skills for a job is not taboo nor is it a stigma. My own grandmother went to Olive-Harvey and Malcolm X to become a nurse.

You are looking at my grandmother's old Malcolm X College ID, which I found in her things after she passed away last year. That discovery was a powerful illustration of some of her last words to me: "Make sure other people have the same opportunity we did." It's a daily reminder of our mission and mine as Chancellor.

I am sure many of us in this room know people who went on to successful careers and lives after so-called vocational training.

Our first two College to Careers initiatives are in health care at Malcolm X College and transportation, distribution and logistics – TDL for short – at Olive-Harvey College, industries that together are forecasted to have nearly 200,000 local job openings over the next 10 years. Both colleges offered credentials in these fields for decades, and doing it well in the overwhelming majority of cases. But here is the question, were they teaching to the right skills and jobs? Our partners are here to ensure that we are.

These are living, breathing partnerships, not just signatures on a piece of paper for public relations purposes.

Many of these companies already have been holding work sessions with our staff and faculty. Just last week, Allscripts recruiters were in our District office to interview students for positions available this summer.

We will be rolling out more College to Careers initiatives over the next two years.

A key premise of College to Careers and the rest of our academic Reinvention is that no City Colleges degree should be a "dead end." We are creating a system of stackable credentials, with each credential designed to stand on its own but also to serve as a gateway to a more advanced one so that students can continue to learn and advance throughout their career.

Take, for instance, one of our new career pathways in TDL. In just two weeks, a student can get a TDL orientation and a one-week forklift operator certificate. That certificate can be parlayed into later admission into an 8 week basic certificate, then into a 4-month advanced certificate in supply chain management, and then that certificate can be parlayed into an associate's degree in distribution and logistics, which itself can be a gateway into a bachelor's in the same field. At each step, a worker can get a new, more advanced job, but each step is valuable in and of itself by leading to a good job.

Making our programs more relevant is a key part of our strategy to boost completion for all CCC students.

Whether you call it general education, transfer or non-occupational, we have not walked away from preparing students to go on to four-year colleges and universities. For those students whose career aspirations imply a bachelor's degree from the start – about a third of our 120,000 students – we have created special transfer centers to help them select the right courses and ensure they transfer successfully.

Not only can the typical student save 40,000 dollars in tuition by attending City Colleges of Chicago first, but we now have processes in place to synch course requirements and ensure our students transfer as full juniors without losing precious time and tuition dollars at their destination four-year institution.

Transfer agreements have recently been signed with the Illinois Institute of Technology, the University of Illinois at Chicago and Urbana-Champaign, DePaul University and Lewis University. The number of students transferring from CCC to DePaul has more than doubled.

With the Presidential Scholarship, IIT offers qualifying CCC transfer students substantial financial support, including an annual tuition scholarship award worth more than 30-thousand dollars.

As a result of getting the word out on our quality programs and the economy pushing people to get more training and more education, our credit enrollment is up 16 percent in the last two full fiscal years.

That contrasts with a 15-percent drop in adult education – mostly GED and English-as-a-Second-Language students – over the same time period.

We looked into this issue and found that many of CCC's adult education sites in the community were located where likely GED and ESL students used to live years or decades ago. Adult education is very much a business of proximity, and we are in the process of realigning our presence with the demand based on the city's demographics today, and are confident that will help address the decline in enrollment in that area.

Most crucially, we are working in a new collaborative manner with our most effective weapon in the battle for student success – our faculty. Earlier this month, we reached a seminal new labor agreement with AFSCME, which represents our adult educators. AFSCME must be commended for agreeing to take an enhanced stake in student success.

For the first time at City Colleges, up to 8 percent of our adult education instructors' compensation will be tied to progress toward state achievement goals. This is an unprecedented step in Illinois. We are also investing in professional development and class preparation to fully support our instructors so they can be as impactful as possible.

These are the types of initiatives that help ensure more students reach their goals. And we are making progress here as well.

When I became Chancellor, the graduation rate – measuring the number of students who graduate within three years of enrolling – was 7 percent. Our data – which must still be validated by the Illinois Community College Board and the U.S. Department of Education – shows the graduation rate grew to 10 percent in 2011.

This is a very modest increase, one we are not satisfied with. It puts us at roughly half the graduation rate of the most effective community colleges in the Chicago area and still well behind the best-in-class community college systems in other states. But it is CCC's highest completion rate in more than a decade, and we are cautiously confident the trend will continue this year and beyond.

We forecast 3,300 of our students will earn an associate's degree this May, up 800 from last year and double the number ten years ago.

Over the last few months, CCC worked with students at or near the required number of credits for an associate's degree to ensure they took the remaining classes necessary to meet foundation and major requirements to graduate and go on to jobs or further education.

Under current federal reporting rules, less half of this year's proud graduates will be counted as such by government statistics because they only take into account students who get a two-year degree within three years of enrolling. If you juggle work, family and college and graduate from City Colleges in more than three years, you never appear in the official statistics. We are keenly aware of the fact documented by Complete College America that, when it comes to college completion, time is very much the enemy. But, while we are trying to get students to graduate faster, we want to make sure those who take more time are counted.

As Complete College America – where I sit on the board – found, the new majority on American campuses are students who are juggling some combination of families, jobs, and school while commuting to class.

We need to recognize this new face of education, where City Colleges of Chicago is far more representative than the Ivy-clad campuses many of us attended.

Secretary Duncan must be applauded for focusing on this issue, and he has called on the states to examine their data and processes. CCC staff was part of this process for Illinois.

Our academic reinvention has been made possible in large part by fundamental operational reforms.

It is incumbent upon us to operate with the accountability of a business – who wouldn't expect a six hundred million dollar institution to be managed responsibly like any business? The only difference is that we are in the business of student success.

In two years, we have brought about 41 million dollars in administrative savings that are being redirected to the classroom. Where we often had seven redundant functions at our seven colleges, we have centralized key operations at our district Office, cut management budgets, and boosted efficiencies. We have taken some criticism for being “bloated” at our District Office, when in fact, we are being more efficient and transparent, and as you have heard today, the strategy is beginning to reap benefits for our students and our city.

As part of a comprehensive review to bring benefits more in line with the market, we reduced our benefits liability by more than 1 million dollars a year.

Reforms have included ending sick day payouts for new non-union hires, increasing health insurance co-pays and deductibles, ending premium-free health care for senior CCC leaders and rescinding free lifetime retiree health care for those same leaders – including myself.

Additional reforms are under way, including some in close cooperation with our largest unions, which make up 80 percent of our workforce. Some of our unions already have agreed to ending sick-day payouts for new hires, to freezing sick-day banks in place for current employees, and – most of all – to eliminating step pay increases for new hires.

All this has allowed us to invest in student success – and to launch a five-year, \$524 million capital plan with investments across the system.

City Colleges will build a new Malcolm X College campus, including a new Allied Health Academy to support College to Careers near the heart of the Illinois Medical District, and – with the help of the State of Illinois – a new Transportation, Distribution and Logistics Center at Olive-Harvey College. This will be supplemented by significant capital investments at each of our colleges.

These brick-and-mortar projects will reflect the latest changes in pedagogy and technology to ensure our students are job-ready the second they walk out of the classroom.

This is how, every day a bit more and with the help of many of you in this room, we bring Reinvention closer to full reality for our students and our city.

I sincerely hope that the facts and numbers you heard today will have you walking away with the knowledge that, when it comes to building a stronger Chicago economy, City Colleges is an increasingly important and relevant part of the equation.

Thank you.