

REMARKS BY CHERYL L. HYMAN
CITY CLUB OF CHICAGO
JUNE 24, 2013

Thank you Mayor, for that kind introduction and for being City Colleges' greatest champion. I want to say happy birthday to another big advocate of our work, Beth Swanson.

I also want to thank Jay for inviting me back to speak at the City Club for the third year running... Jay, you may start seeing those City Club mugs on ebay.

It's always an honor to be invited to provide an update on our work. Thank you to all of you for coming out this afternoon.

Rather than an ice breaker today, I thought we'd offer you the real thing —an "icing breaker", in the form of a cupcake covered with buttercream icing courtesy of students from City Colleges' Washburne Culinary Institute and a cookie from students at our French Pastry School.

One of the hallmarks of reform at City Colleges is that we are working to ensure our students get real-world experience. The tasty treat includes a reminder of the two restaurants our students run – the Parrot Cage at South Shore Cultural Center and Sikia at Kennedy-King College – where you can

sample their work. A Washburne alum, Josh Rodriguez, is sous chef here at Maggiano's, and he also had a hand in your meal today.

We have many stories of City Colleges alumni accomplishing amazing things in our city. From preparing the food we eat at high end and neighborhood restaurants, to staffing advanced manufacturing plants, to preserving the safety of our streets, teaching our children, and taking care of us at major hospitals across Chicago, and—proudly running the city colleges system itself. Our students and alumni make this city work.

As I said when we launched Reinvention three years ago – we should celebrate these stories, anecdotes of our students' success, but we must also embrace data.

Today, I will discuss in quantifiable terms where we've been and where we are headed over the next five years.

When I first came to City Club, three years ago, I unveiled some staggering data about City Colleges' performance, but I also came with solutions in the form of a plan for Reinvention.

Three years later, I am fortunate to have been reappointed by Mayor Emanuel for a second term as Chancellor. The

picture for City Colleges is brighter today, though we still have a long way to go.

First, a look at how far we've come...

When we launched Reinvention, we had to shift the paradigm of a community college from an institution focused solely on access – or the number of students enrolled -- to a system focused on both access and success – meaning that our students complete their programs and go on to further education or right into the workforce.

We ushered in a new era of accountability - where everyone at City Colleges is accountable for student success.

We changed the job description of our board members, our presidents and my own to include student outcomes. We also introduced student success pay into two key contracts with our full-time faculty and our adult educators, replacing retention pay with pay for performance.

When I arrived, the graduation rate was 7%. The average rate among the rest of Illinois' community colleges was 22 percent.

Among community colleges in the top 10 U.S. cities, the average was 16 percent.

Put simply, we were underperforming by any measure.

After much internal debate about the 7 percent graduation rate in particular, and the data in general, everyone stepped up to focus on what is important for our students. Our faculty, staff and students on the reinvention taskforce teams have logged more than 65-thousand hours identifying our most pressing challenges and devising solutions.

This year – through the hard work of our faculty and staff – we expect the graduation rate will rise to 12 percentage points – a 71 percent increase since the launch of Reinvention.

Because the federal graduation rate only counts first-time, full-time students – a fraction of our population – we also look at the number of completers.

And this year, the number of students earning an associate's degree will reach nearly 4,000, an 80% increase since the launch of Reinvention....

...the highest on record in City Colleges history.

Our degree increase from 2011 to 2012 was more than 4 times the Illinois community college average.

Since the launch of Reinvention, we have emphasized enrollment with a purpose – that is programs that lead our students to further college and careers.

Credit enrollment – one such type – is up 15%. Over the same period, Illinois community colleges were up 7% on average and nationally community colleges were down 2%. We are clearly outperforming our peers.

Among our students are CPS juniors and seniors taking advantage of our early college programs, shortening their path to a college degree and saving on college tuition.

Enrollment in our Dual Credit program, which lets CPS students take college-level courses at their high school, has doubled since Spring 2012.

And our dual enrollment program, which allows high school students to take classes on our campuses, has nearly quadrupled since Fall 2011.

As the Mayor says, we have one education system in Chicago – from early childhood to K-12 to our community colleges, and with his gentle nudging, we are increasingly coordinated.

We've also made major changes in our adult education program – for students in need of a GED, English as a second language, or adult basic education.

According to the 2010 census, almost 330,000 Chicagoans lack a high-school diploma. Yet, only about 45,000 people are enrolled in a GED or an ESL program.

We noticed we could do better reaching out to those in need. We discovered some of our community education sites were located in areas where the demand was 10 to 20 years ago, not in areas where the demand is today.

So this year, we launched 30 new adult education sites in communities of need. We also expanded bridge programs that allow students to build skills in a career area and earn marketable credentials while developing basic literacy. And we expanded our gateway program, which provides counseling and scholarship support to ensure higher level adult education students don't stop out, but continue on to college credit courses.

When I was at City Club last year, I told you our adult education enrollment was down 15 percent.

Today I am pleased to announce a turnaround -- our adult education enrollment is up 5 percent this year.

GED enrollment is up 21 percent. And the GED is no longer a terminal degree.

The number of students gaining at least one level in adult education is also 50 percent higher.

I will highlight two more signs of progress that give us confidence in our direction before we look ahead.

Our region faces about a nine percent unemployment rate but has tens of thousands of jobs available. This is because of both a skills gap – people need the skills to successfully compete for open positions and an information gap – because many people don't know what jobs are available and what they need to do to seize them.

The Mayor and I launched College to Careers in 2011 to tackle both these issues.

Now our faculty and staff are working with industry leaders to revamp our curriculum to ensure it prepares students for the 500,000-plus jobs coming over the next decade in the six fields that will generate 80% of our region's job growth: IT, healthcare, culinary and hospitality, business, advanced manufacturing and T-D-L.

We have more than 100 College to Careers partners from industry and four-year institutions.

And more than 700 City Colleges students have since found a job or paid internship in a College to Careers field. Just like Bar-tos, Carla, Carmen, and Torie at AON, who the Mayor introduced you to earlier.

With new courses in I-T problem solving, supply chain management and insurance launching this fall, we expect their ranks will continue to grow.

College to Careers has attracted national, even international attention, as an economic development model, with delegations from the World Bank, England and South East Asia, coming to learn more. In fact, I am headed to D-C this week to discuss College to Careers with more World Bank senior staff.

As we innovate and change, we must ensure we continue to deliver education efficiently, and that's where our operational reforms come into play.

Our proposed FY2014 budget, which our Board should consider next month, is balanced with no tuition or tax increases. In fact, we have had no property tax increase since the launch of Reinvention. We have held the line on tuition for the last two years.

I want to commend the General Assembly for their steadfast support of community colleges.

In May 2013, the General Assembly voted to hold level our state funding and the appropriation for the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). Recognizing, we believe, the value community colleges bring to our students, their families, and the role we play in the economy.

We have also been doing our part.

Over the last three years, through strategic centralization, cuts to management budgets, and improved efficiencies, we have saved \$51 million that we have reinvested in academic and student supports.

From renegotiating contracts with our full-time and adult education faculty, clerical staff, and TV station electricians, we will save taxpayers \$15 million over the terms of prior contracts.

These savings make investment possible.

Strong reserves have enabled us to launch a \$524 million capital plan including a new Malcolm X College campus and a new TDL Center for Olive-Harvey College.

The new Malcolm X College campus – adjacent to the Illinois Medical District -- will feature a virtual hospital, among the latest instructional tools.

And the TDL center will contain a real-working warehouse that will serve as the new distribution center for City Colleges, which our students will run.

We haven't taken much of a breath the last three years, and with our students' futures at stake, we just can't afford to. But the work is paying off, and our plan ahead is just as ambitious.

Today I'll share highlights of our vision for City Colleges' future—a copy of our five year plan is at your seat.

This plan will bring us closer to our goal of becoming a best-in-class community college system, of becoming an economic engine of our city, a key resource for employers looking to hire and four year colleges looking to recruit, and first and foremost, a launching pad for our students – on to further college and career success.

Solely written and designed by City Colleges in-house team, the plan is the product of 18 months of data gathering and analysis that reviewed City Colleges past performance, lessons learned from Reinvention, and best-in-class

community college results to establish historical benchmarks and five year targets on a host of key measures – from completion to retention, from employment to enrollment.

When you set a goal, with a hard number attached, you are more likely to attain it, and of course, it is also more obvious if you miss the mark.

Sharing targets with the public is risky for any company or organization, it means you are accountable in a very real way.

We have not been afraid of taking bold steps these last three years and we won't stop now.

I will share five key targets today among the many we outline in the plan and a few strategies that will allow us to reach those goals.

First: Five years from now, in 2018: we expect the number of degrees awarded each year will have jumped by 37 percent.

Given our 80% increase to date, this is an attainable goal.

We project to confer 5,400 degrees in 2018, nearly two and a half times the number when Reinvention began.

Based on studies that show that earning an associate's degree compared to a high school diploma will yield an additional 423-thousand dollars in earnings over a person's lifetime...

That means, the additional 33-hundred degrees our students have earned so far, above and beyond the average when I arrived, would equate to \$1.4 billion dollars in new lifetime earnings.

Plus, with the new 12-thousand degrees that are expected to be earned when we reach our goal, Reinvention would be responsible for \$6.6 billion in new lifetime earnings for Chicagoans.

That is the kind of economic development the Mayor has been relentless in driving, and I know our faculty, staff and, above all, our students will rise to the occasion.

At the same time, we expect to reach a graduation rate of more than 20 percentage points compared to 12 today. That would put us on par with community colleges nationally. And equate to an increase of 67 percent.

Why do we think this is possible?

First, we're determined.

Secondly, others have done the same.

Kansas City Community College went from 12 percent to 23 percent – a jump of 92 percent - in six years.

We will reach this goal through the second stage of Reinvention, which we call Reinvention to the seventh power, reflecting the taskforce teams embedded at each of our seven colleges and allowing us to achieve reform at scale.

The teams are building a Student GPS (or Guided Path to Success), that will create clear pathways to success for our students. The pathway system is similar to that which helped Valencia College in Orlando earn the Aspen Institute's prize for Community College Excellence.

Students will be equipped with program maps, outlining semester by semester, the courses that will result in a certificate or degree.

Furthermore, some courses may be scheduled in blocks to make it easier for our students to plan and balance competing priorities like work and family. Students will be able to enroll in a whole program, not just courses, so they see their path to completion starting day one.

These structural changes will allow us to reduce the time required to earn a degree.

We will also continue to leverage our new investments in veterans centers, wellness centers that offer students' social and emotional support, a new assigned advising system and early alert system allowing us to intervene with struggling students before its too late.

The second key target I'll point out is that by 2018, we expect that more than two-thirds of students in occupational programs will be employed in their area of training, an 18 percent increase over today.

College to Careers is at the heart of attaining this goal.

Particularly, the partner relationships we are developing, the new and revamped programs in six fast growing fields that will better align with workforce demand, our new soft skills training, and newly enhanced career planning and placement services will be key to meeting this critically-important target and helping us solve the region's skills and information gap.

The third key target I want to call out today deals with transfer. By 2018, we expect more than half of our students

will transfer to a four-year college following graduation, a 34 percent increase from today.

Again, this target will benefit from College to Careers as many of our C2C programs are indeed transfer track. We will also work closely with four-year institutions on meaningful articulation agreements, and through our pathways effort, we'll see to it that students select courses that transfer, so they receive full junior status in their desired field of study.

One of this year's many great transfer students is here today, Ian Dobbins. Stand up Ian. Ian is transferring to Columbia University in New York City this fall where he will double major in music and anthropology. And he saved thousands of dollars on his Columbia degree by coming to City Colleges first. Ian is clearly very smart.

When we reach our fourth key target, one-third of our new remedial students will advance to college-level work within one year, an increase of 12 percent from today.

87% of our students need some form of remediation.

So we are working on this goal from multiple fronts.

But one of our new approaches is with the national testing service ETS that is evaluating entering students on the basis

of both cognitive and non-cognitive skills to better place students in appropriate courses at the onset of their academic program so we give them full credit for their abilities and potential. Motivation is often an overlooked measure that we will take into account.

A fifth target will build off our progress in adult education.

By 2018, four times as many of our adult education students than today will transition into a credit-level course after one semester in a GED or ESL program.

To reach this goal, we will continue to strengthen already successful bridge and transitional programs that are leading students to credit courses.

These five targets and the rest of those in the plan are bold, but we believe, ultimately, achievable goals.

They are consistent with our performance over the last three years OR they represent figures we believe to be newly attainable because of reforms we have and are putting in place.

These goals are where we need to be in order to become what I call a best-in-class community college system.

When I say this, that City Colleges will become a best-in-class community college system, I sometimes notice, out of the corner of my eye, a few raised eyebrows.

I believe some people think having such high aspirations, considering where we are coming from, is wishful thinking.

But as I tell our students, and as someone told me, you can't let history or circumstance dictate your destiny. If I did that, I would not be here today.

We cannot hold diminished expectations for our students, nor can we hold them for our institution.

When I think about success against all odds – I think of Her-Rahr-Doe Salinas, a proud member of City Colleges' class of 2013. I single him out because he's been a personal inspiration to me.

Her-Rahr-Doe and his mother are here today. Please stand up and wave.

In adolescence, a retina detachment in both eyes left Her-Rahr-Doe completely blind. There would be no options for education or work in his small Mexican town, so when he was 13, his sisters and parents left for America to give him a better life.

In Chicago, he learned Braille and English at the same time, often not understanding anything that was being said to him, but once he had mastered both, he thrived.

As an undocumented immigrant he had few options for college scholarships, no access to financial aid, and no legal right to disability services for his education. In spite of all this, he enrolled at Daley College, one of our City Colleges, and he was able to pay his own way.

Five years later, Her-Rahr-Doe is a City Colleges graduate. He recently received temporary status through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, and now has a work permit and a Social Security number.

This past semester he took his first class in political science at University of Illinois at Chicago, where he hopes to complete a bachelor's in 2016 and pursue further education in law or social work.

Where most of us would have given up, Her-Rahr-Doe keeps going.

Reforms like the immigration bill Senator Durbin is shepherding through the Senate will help make Her-Rahr-Doe's dream a reality. He is also the first recipient of a

scholarship that I am personally funding for City Colleges students who face adversity but bravely forge ahead.

Her-Rahr-Doe is one of the 115,000 of our students striving to contribute their talents to our city.

He is succeeding in spite of society's long odds, and often, low expectations.

I am here to make certain that all of our students and our institution break free from the mentality of excuses, of low expectations, and realize their true potential like I did.

I know I said that we must move past anecdotes and use data to make decisions.

Data is critical to set targets and track our progress.

But it is our students and their stories that inspire us and demand City Colleges succeeds.

It is our students that make us determined -- to become the institution the nation needs us to be, the institution that the Mayor expects us to be, and the institution I know we can be.

Over the next five years...

City Colleges will become an institution that ensures Chicago has the skilled workforce so companies grow here in our city.

An institution that four-year colleges look to for transfer students.

An institution that taxpayers rely on to use resources efficiently and deliver unprecedented educational value in their communities.

And an institution that ensures each and every student succeeds.

Thank you.

Go Blackhawks!