

I. Presentation of Data

In this Part, we present examples of the data that are currently available from CUNY and outside sources reflecting the outcomes of CUNY's open access and remediation policies. The Task Force staff's data gathering efforts were guided by the League for Innovation's Assessing Institutional Effectiveness in Community Colleges, which provides that, to be constructive, outcome measures must reflect institutional and student goals. Accordingly, we sought to (1) identify the probable goals of CUNY's access policies and remediation programs; (2) obtain valid and reliable outcome data, from CUNY and external sources, that corresponded to these goals; and (3) benchmark CUNY performance, using multi-year outcome data and data from across New York State, from other peer institutions, and from across the nation.

As we discussed in Part **Error! Reference source not found.**, CUNY has a profound lack of information on its own effectiveness. While the university's institutional researchers collect reams of data on incoming students and on the outlines of students' educational trajectory, they do so without a clear sense of need or purpose. Further, CUNY's central institutional research office ("CUNY Institutional Research") does not collect comprehensive data on students, faculty, academic offerings, and finances in real time, nor do they look beyond CUNY to third parties for information on student outcomes or local economic needs. Instead, CUNY Institutional Research relies on the individual campuses to send them selected student data files on a periodic basis. They do not, to our knowledge, collect information on the faculty, academic program offerings, university finances, or local economic needs at all.³⁶ Consequently, CUNY cannot use outcome data as a basis for program improvements and policy decisions.

The following tables summarize the goals and categories of outcome data covered in this document. With respect to access, CUNY Institutional Research provided little information, other than retention and graduation rates, to indicate whether students are achieving their educational goals (which, research shows, include not only earning an undergraduate degree, but also general learning or self improvement; improving their position in the job market; and preparing for further study). We were able to obtain some CUNY data and benchmarking information from outside sources.

³⁶ Institutional Research interview, 6-25-98.

Table 1. Access Goals, Appropriate Outcome Data, and Availability

STUDENTS' GOALS	APPROPRIATE OUTCOME DATA	AVAILABILITY
Earning an undergraduate degree.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention rates Graduation rates 	CUNY, New York State Education Department, <i>U.S. News & World Report</i> , National Center for Education Statistics, Internet
General learning or self-improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student follow-up survey results 	Not available (except BMCC study)
Improving employment-related skills, earning a professional credential, obtaining employment, or otherwise improving position in the job market.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional and licensing examination results Job placement survey results 	New York State Education Department, National Association of State Boards of Accounting, CUNY
Preparing for further study at the bachelor's or graduate level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer rates Graduate admissions test results 	Association of American Medical Colleges, CUNY

Sources: NCES 98-013, 54; Gittell and Steffy, 9-10; Assessing Institutional Effectiveness in Community Colleges, 42-43.

With respect to remediation, CUNY could provide virtually no objective information on the effectiveness of its remedial courses at transmitting basic skills, supporting college-level programs, or meeting students' individual needs. CUNY was only able to provide information on how quickly students moved through remedial courses and accumulated degree credits. Due to the limitations of this study, the Task Force staff did not obtain any information on the effectiveness of CUNY's remediation programs from outside sources such as local employers or institutions that receive CUNY transfer students.

Table 2. Remediation Goals, Appropriate Outcome Data, and Availability

CUNY's GOALS	APPROPRIATE OUTCOME DATA	AVAILABILITY
Transmitting basic skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre- and post-testing Follow-up with employers 	Not available (except CLIP)
Effectively supporting college-level programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up surveys, interviews, or focus groups with college-level instructors Results of studies comparing the performance of students who completed remediation with similar students who enrolled directly in college-level courses Retention and graduation rates 	Not available (except retention and graduation rates)
Meeting students' remediation needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results of studies correlating placement recommendations with course success 	Not available (except CUNY WAT study)
Moving students quickly into college-level work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rates of progress through remedial programs Credit accumulation rates 	CUNY

Sources: *Open Admissions and Remedial Education at the City University of New York*, Section V.C.1, "The Goals of Remediation at CUNY"; Assessing Institutional Effectiveness in Community Colleges, 25-26.

A. *Caveats About the Data*

The information presented in this Part should be interpreted cautiously, because it suffers from the following limitations:

- *CUNY does not match outcome data to institutional or student goals.* It is a fundamental principle of outcomes assessment that, in order to be most informative, results should be analyzed in the light of the goals that were originally intended.³⁷ For example, CUNY should interpret the same set of Medical College Admission Test scores differently depending on whether they were the scores of students from Brooklyn College, which has a pre-med program, or John Jay, whose undergraduate curriculum is not geared towards careers in medicine.³⁸ Because CUNY could provide little empirical information about its own goals or the goals of its students, it was impossible to analyze the available outcome data in terms of those goals.
- *CUNY does not match outcome data to local economic needs.* Just as it is important to consider whether CUNY is helping students meet their educational goals, it is important to consider whether CUNY is meeting local employers' need for well-educated employees. For example, in order to determine whether CUNY is producing adequate numbers of certified teachers or public accountants, the performance of CUNY students on the applicable certification exams should be evaluated in the light of the metropolitan area's projected need for these professionals. CUNY does not maintain timely and accurate data on the needs of local employers. Moreover, due to the limits of this study, we did not gather that information ourselves. This prohibited us from determining whether CUNY is meeting local employers' needs for well-educated employees.
- *The outcome measures that are currently available are not necessarily the most appropriate ones.* In many instances, CUNY limits its data collection to information that is relatively easy to obtain, such as: graduation rates, admissions information, and initial FSAT results; information that is made available automatically, such as nursing exam results; and information that is mandated by the federal government, such as the annual employment survey of vocational graduates. As we discussed in Parts **Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.**, the information that is easiest to collect is not necessarily the information best suited to identifying needed improvements in teaching, learning, and the delivery of services to students.³⁹

³⁷ *Assessing Institutional Effectiveness in Community Colleges*, 2, 5.

³⁸ *Brooklyn Bulletin*, 13; Paul A. Wyatt, John Jay Career Development Services, "Examination Results," memorandum to Hector Ortiz, John Jay Dean of Students, dated 3-29-99.

³⁹ *Assessing Institutional Effectiveness in Community Colleges*, 46-48.

- *Outcome data are frequently not available for relevant subpopulations.* To enable an assessment of the effectiveness of CUNY’s access policies in serving various target populations – including underprepared students, racial and ethnic minorities, and economically disadvantaged students – the Task Force staff sought to present outcome data broken out for these populations whenever possible. Unfortunately, in many instances, subpopulation data were not available.
- *Professional, licensing, and graduate admissions test results are for self-selected populations.* Because CUNY generally collects neither the test results themselves, nor information on students’ initial educational goals, the Task Force staff could not determine how well CUNY’s academic programs prepared students to achieve their goals. In particular, with respect to professional, licensing, and graduate admissions tests, CUNY usually failed to specify how many students actually took the tests – much less how many students enrolled in college intending to prepare for the tests but changed their path somewhere along the way.
- *Some measures are inherently flawed or subjective.* To the extent possible, the Task Force staff has attempted to report valid and reliable information that is recommended by institutional assessment experts, while avoiding measures that the Task Force’s research suggests are particularly unreliable. For example, because RAND’s analysis has raised questions about the reliability of grading at CUNY,⁴⁰ we have not included information on course grades in this report. Similarly, due to the lack of objective, university-wide remedial exit standards;⁴¹ college-by-college differences in students’ remedial obligations;⁴² and the financial disincentives against dismissing students who fail to complete their remedial obligations within the time limit prescribed by the Trustees, this Part does not present data on student progress through remedial programs. On the other hand, we have reported credit accumulation and graduation rates, even though these measures are related to students’ ability to complete remediation and achieve a certain GPA.

B. Access Outcome Data

The provision of broad access to higher education implies a commitment to help all students attain their educational goals.⁴³ Indeed, in 1969, when CUNY’s Trustees voted to overhaul admissions policies, they stated that their intention was not only to provide an open door to

⁴⁰ RAND (Klein & Orlando) (suggesting that unreliability of CUNY’s grading system may be a cause of low correlations of both SAT and FSAT scores with CUNY students’ grade point averages).

⁴¹ See accompanying report, *Open Admissions and Remedial Education at the City University of New York*, Section V.B.2.b, “Progress testing, post-testing, exit from remediation, and certification.”

⁴² See accompanying report, *Open Admissions and Remedial Education at the City University of New York*, Section III.I.3, “Testing Policy” (a university-wide minimum passing score for the Reading Assessment Test the minimum did not apply to all entering students until Fall 1998), and Section V.A.3, “The Basic Configuration of Remediation at CUNY.”

⁴³ IHEP, 6; [Assessing Institutional Effectiveness in Community Colleges](#), 33-43.

higher education, but also to enable the newly admitted students to succeed in college.⁴⁴ Accordingly, the Task Force staff concluded that access outcome measures should reflect students' educational goals. Table 1 lists the core educational goals of CUNY students, as identified by our research, along with the corresponding outcome data we were able to pull together. The following subsections present the outcome data listed in column two.

Open admissions at CUNY was originally designed to broaden access for certain target populations, including underprepared students, racial and ethnic minorities, and economically disadvantaged students.⁴⁵ Accordingly, whenever possible, we have provided outcome data broken down by target population, to facilitate assessment of the extent to which these students are achieving their individual goals, and how their success rates compare to those for all students.⁴⁶ More in-depth outcome data on underprepared students are presented in Section C, "Remediation Outcome Data."

1. Goal: Earning an Undergraduate Degree; Outcome Measure: Retention and Graduation Rates

Data availability. CUNY Institutional Research collects and publishes extensive retention and graduation data each year, in its annual data books. Certain CUNY and comparison data are also published by the New York State Education Department, and by *U.S. News & World Report*, in its annual "America's Best Colleges" issue. Comparison data are also available from the National Center for Education Statistics.⁴⁷

Definitional notes. Whenever we use graduation rates from CUNY's data books, rates represent the first degree earned at any CUNY college. Thus, the graduation rate for Baruch's bachelor's entrants would include a student who transferred from Baruch to BMCC and earned an associate degree.

CUNY defines "retention rate" as the percentage of an entering cohort that is enrolled in any CUNY college in a given semester. For example, a "six-year retention rate" measures the percent of a Fall semester entering cohort that is enrolled in the sixth Spring semester thereafter. All members of the entering cohort who were enrolled in any CUNY college during the semester at issue are counted, even if they "stopped out" or transferred from one CUNY college to another in the interim. Enrollment is measured at the end of the semester, but any student who enrolled at the beginning of the semester is counted, even if she drops out or flunks

⁴⁴ See accompanying report, *Open Admissions and Remedial Education at the City University of New York*, Section VI.B.1, "Assessing the provision of access."

⁴⁵ See accompanying report, *Open Admissions and Remedial Education at the City University of New York*, Section III.C, "The Birth of Open Admissions at CUNY (1965-1970)," and Section III.D, "CUNY's Solution to the Problem of Segregation."

⁴⁶ *Assessing Institutional Effectiveness in Community Colleges*, 42.

⁴⁷ The Task Force staff frequently had difficulty comparing CUNY data with the *U.S. News* and NCES data because they were presented in incompatible formats. For example, CUNY publishes Fall to Spring and Spring to Spring retention rates instead of Fall to Fall retention rates.

out before the end – unless her records have been removed from the college’s enrollment tape.⁴⁸

a) Senior Colleges and Bachelor’s Programs

In this section, we compare the freshman retention and six-year graduation rates of CUNY’s senior colleges and bachelor’s programs with one another, and with comparable statistics for three sets of neighboring or peer institutions: other colleges in New York State; other large, urban public colleges that have a high percentage of minority students; and the top-tier colleges of other large public university systems.

- (1) Trend data and comparison with other colleges in N.Y. State

Table 3, below, shows a clear upward trend in graduation rates for CUNY’s bachelor’s programs over the last two decades. Six-year graduation rates have risen approximately six points since the entering class of 1978, from 26.5% to 32.7%.

Table 3. Percent of Fall First-Time Full-Time Entrants to Bachelor’s Degree Programs Graduating at the Same Institution Within Six Years

Year of Entry	New York Statewide *	CUNY	SUNY	New York Independent
1978	58.3	26.5	50.6	62.3
1980	56.5	27.0	49.8	60.0
1982	57.8	28.7	52.6	60.7
1984	58.4	29.2	54.6	60.3
1986	57.4	31.6	56.1	63.4
1988	58.4	30.1	60.2	63.8
1990	58.4	29.9	60.7	63.4
1991	58.4	32.7	59.2	63.0

Source: NYS Education Department, Office of Higher Education, Research and Information Systems, Nov. 1998, “Graduation Rates and Onschedule Rates.”

*1978-1984: Percentage calculated excluding CUNY.

⁴⁸ Phone conversations with CUNY Institutional Research.

This upward trend is mirrored at SUNY and at New York State’s independent higher education institutions. The statewide average has remained stable since 1988, despite increases in each sector.

Table 3 also shows that the six-year graduation rates at SUNY and in the independent sector, which hover around 60%, are double the CUNY average, which is just over 30%. We sought to determine the extent to which this disparity is attributable to the fact that CUNY students take longer to earn a degree, by comparing CUNY and SUNY ten-year graduation rates. Unfortunately, however, comparable data were not available.

(2) Comparison between SEEK and regularly admitted bachelor’s students

The Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (“SEEK”) program is one of the primary ways in which CUNY puts its access mission into practice at the senior colleges. In this subsection, we compare retention and graduation rates for SEEK students with the same statistics for CUNY’s regularly-admitted senior college freshmen.

Table 4, below, shows that although retention rates for SEEK students are only slightly below those for regularly-admitted full-time bachelor’s entrants, SEEK students are less than half as likely to earn a degree. After six years, for example, only 16.9% of SEEK entrants had earned an associate or bachelor’s degree, compared with 37.2% of CUNY’s regularly-admitted full-time bachelor’s entrants. Furthermore, the table shows that a substantial proportion of the SEEK students who eventually graduated took longer than six years to do so.

Table 4. Retention and Graduation Rates, by Regular or SEEK Status, 1991* First-Time Full-Time Bachelor’s Entrants

	% Still Enrolled				% Graduated			
	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	4 years	6 years	8 years	10 years
Regular	90.7	73.8	62.8	49.6	8.5	37.2	40.9	43.5
SEEK	90.2	71.5	56.1	45.9	0.8	16.9	18.0	21.7

Source: CUNY Student Data Book: Fall 1997, Vol. II, 43, 65.

* 8- and 10-year graduation rates (shaded) are for 1984 entrants.

Table 5, below, shows that there is great variation among the colleges in six-year retention and graduation rates for SEEK students. Three colleges – N.Y. City Tech, Baruch, and John Jay – have rates above 20%; four colleges – Lehman, Staten Island, Hunter, and Queens – have SEEK graduation rates in the high teens (see shaded area of Table); and four colleges – York, Medgar Evers, Brooklyn, and City – have rates in the 10% to 15% range.

Table 5. Six-Year Retention and Graduation Rates, by Regular or SEEK Status, 1991 First-Time Full-Time Bachelor's* Entrants

	SEEK		Regular	
	% Graduated	% Still Enrolled	% Graduated	% Still Enrolled
CUNY	16.9	21.1	37.2	13.5
N.Y. City Tech	26.5	6.0	26.6	8.2
Baruch	24.4	25.3	48.1	12.6
John Jay	23.1	13.2	27.5	10.5
Lehman	17.6	17.3	24.8	16.3
Staten Island	17.2	7.5	28.3	9.1
Hunter	16.8	24.8	40.2	16.8
Queens	16.8	18.2	40.7	10.6
York	14.3	15.0	25.4	15.1
Medgar Evers	13.9	16.7	12.1	14.3
Brooklyn	12.8	22.6	41.9	12.3
City	10.2	26.1	26.4	20.6

Source: CUNY Student Data Book: Fall 1997, Vol. II, 43-78.

* Data on Medgar Evers, N.Y. City Tech, and Staten Island are for first-time full-time associate entrants; CUNY does not publish complete data on bachelor's entrants for these colleges because of their small numbers.

Interestingly, while some colleges have relatively high or relatively low graduation rates in both the SEEK and Regular categories, the colleges with the highest SEEK graduation rates are not always those with the highest graduation rates for regularly-admitted freshmen.⁴⁹ For example, Baruch is near the top of both categories, and Medgar Evers is near the bottom of both; but Brooklyn has both the second-worst SEEK graduation rate and the second-best graduation rate for regularly-admitted full-time freshmen.

(3) Comparison by race and ethnicity

To assess whether CUNY's access policies are effectively serving racial and ethnic minorities, we need to break out outcome data by race and ethnicity. This subsection and subsection B.1.b).(2) present retention and graduation rates by race and ethnicity.

At CUNY, retention and graduation rates for bachelor's students vary significantly by race and ethnicity. Table 6 shows that, while almost half of white bachelor's entrants graduate within eight years, only about one-third of black and Hispanic students do. In other words, the

⁴⁹ Note that, at the associate degree level, there is typically much greater similarity between special program and regularly-admitted students than there is at the bachelor's level, probably because CUNY's associate degree programs are open admissions. Thus, the graduation rates of SEEK associate-degree students at N.Y. City Tech and Medgar Evers are very similar to – even slightly higher than – those for regularly-admitted associate freshmen. The slightly higher graduation rates for special program students may be attributable to the intensive support services these students receive.

graduation rate of CUNY's white bachelor's entrants is 15 to 17 percentage points above that of their black and Hispanic cohorts. Put yet another way, white students were more than 40% more likely to have graduated within eight years than either their black or Hispanic peers. Interestingly, at the eight-year mark, about nine percent of black and Hispanic students were still enrolled, compared with just four percent of white students.

Similar patterns prevailed at the individual senior colleges, with a few notable exceptions. At John Jay and Lehman, only about one-third of white students graduated within eight years – a few percentage points below the rate for black students. At Baruch, the eight-year graduation rates of black and Hispanic students topped 40%, while at York, only about one-quarter of black and Hispanic students graduated within eight years. Finally, at City, more than 14% of white students and more than 13% of Hispanic students were still enrolled after eight years, well above the CUNY-wide average.

Table 6. Eight-Year Retention and Graduation Rates, by Race and Ethnicity: Fall 1990 First-Time Full-Time Bachelor's Entrants

	Race/Ethnicity	% Still Enrolled	% Graduated
CUNY	White	4.4	48.8
	Black	9.2	34.2
	Hispanic	9.2	31.9
Baruch	White	4.0	59.0
	Black	7.1	43.2
	Hispanic	9.1	44.1
Brooklyn	White	3.7	51.2
	Black	11.9	37.4
	Hispanic	6.0	38.8
City	White	14.1	37.4
	Black	9.3	31.2
	Hispanic	13.2	25.2
Hunter	White	7.2	47.5
	Black	11.6	34.4
	Hispanic	9.8	33.4
John Jay	White	3.0	34.9
	Black	6.3	38.3
	Hispanic	8.3	31.9
Lehman	White	4.1	27.8
	Black	10.1	32.1
	Hispanic	7.1	27.6
Queens	White	3.9	50.1
	Black	10.0	29.3
	Hispanic	10.0	28.4
Staten Island	White	4.9	50.0
	Black		
	Hispanic		
York	White		
	Black	7.7	27.2
	Hispanic	7.2	24.7

Source: CUNY Institutional Research, 4-15-99.

* Data for Medgar Evers, N.Y. City Tech, Staten Island (black and Hispanic), and York (white) bachelor's entrants not included due to their small numbers.

Although directly comparable data were not available,⁵⁰ it appears that racial and ethnic disparities in graduation rates are more pronounced at CUNY than in the nation as a whole.

⁵⁰ We note that the data CUNY provided to the Task Force staff were rarely comparable with the information published by the National Center for Education Statistics. In the area of graduation rates, it is easy to guess why: NCES publishes five-year graduation rates, and relatively tiny numbers of CUNY students graduate within five years.

Table 7 shows that, at CUNY, white students were 42.7% more likely to have graduated within eight years than black students, compared with a 24.8% gap in five-year graduation rates nationwide. Similarly, white students were 53% more likely to have graduated from CUNY within eight years than Hispanic students, compared with a 36.6% gap in five-year graduation rates nationwide.

More research is needed to determine the reason for these disparities, and whether CUNY could take steps to reduce them.

Table 7. Racial and Ethnic Gap in Graduation Rates of Bachelor’s Entrants: CUNY (Eight-Year Rate) vs. National (Five-Year Rate)

	CUNY (Eight-Year Rate)			National (Five-Year Rate)		
	8-Yr. Grad. Rate of Fall 1990 Full-Time Entrants (%)	Percentage Points Below White Students’ Rate	% by Which White Students’ Rate Exceeds	5-Yr. Grad. Rate of 1989-90 Entrants (%)*	Percentage Points Below White Students’ Rate	% by Which White Students’ Rate Exceeds
White	48.8	--	--	56.4	--	--
Black	34.2	14.6	42.7	45.2	11.2	24.8
Hispanic	31.9	16.9	53.0	41.3	15.1	36.6

Sources: CUNY Institutional Research, 4-15-99;NCES 98-015.

* Attained degree at any institution.

(4) Comparison with peer colleges

The next comparison is between CUNY’s senior colleges and a group of peer institutions identified by PricewaterhouseCoopers (“PwC”), in collaboration with RAND and the Task Force staff.⁵¹ Table 8, below, shows that there was great variation among the CUNY senior colleges in terms of their six-year graduation rates and Fall-to-Fall freshman retention rates, and in terms of how well they compared to their peer institutions.

⁵¹ The peer institutions were selected according to the following criteria:

- They are public, rather than private, institutions, and are part of a larger system.
- They offer a level of instruction (Carnegie class) similar to CUNY’s senior colleges. A significant portion of the instruction at the peer institutions is devoted to the lower division, which makes them comparable to CUNY’s comprehensive senior colleges.
- They are located in major urban areas.
- They have a large enrollment.
- A high percentage of their students are members of racial or ethnic minorities.

The three SUNY colleges that provided the closest comparison with the CUNY colleges were also included, even though they are not located in major urban areas and, in two cases, have relatively low minority populations. See PwC Report I, page 16, for more information.

Table 8. Graduation and Freshman Retention Rates of CUNY Senior Colleges and Peers.⁵²

Senior or Comprehensive College	6-Yr. Grad. Rate (%)	Fall-to-Fall Freshman Retention Rate [‡] (%)
SUNY Buffalo	59	84
CUNY Baruch	41	82
CUNY Staten Island	41	80
Florida International	40	86
San Francisco State	39	78
SUNY Purchase	37	70
CUNY Queens	37	78
CUNY Brooklyn	36	80
Cal State Los Angeles	32	75
CUNY Hunter	31	75
Jersey City State College	30	74
SUNY Old Westbury	28	65
CUNY N.Y. City Tech	27 ^a	n/a
CUNY John Jay	26	n/a
Georgia State	25	70
University of Texas El Paso	24	64
Chicago State	22	66
CUNY Lehman	22	70
CUNY York	22	61
CUNY City	21	85
Northeastern Illinois	13	62
CUNY Medgar Evers	10	68

Sources: *U.S. News & World Report*, 1999, “America’s Best Colleges” (retention rates and peer college graduation rates); *CUNY Student Data Book: Fall 1997*, Vol. II, 87-99 (CUNY graduation rates); PwC *Report III*, 17 (list of peer colleges).

^a Associate entrants only.

[‡] Average rate for 1993-1996 entering freshmen.

Four of CUNY’s eleven senior colleges – Baruch, College of Staten Island, Queens College, and Brooklyn College – compared favorably with their peer institutions, with six-year graduation rates in the mid-thirties to low forties and freshman retention rates of around 80%. One college – SUNY Buffalo – had a much higher graduation rate of 59%, and three colleges had higher freshman retention rates: Florida International (86%), City College (85%), and SUNY Buffalo (84%).

⁵² The CUNY graduation rates in Table 8 and Table 9 were obtained from the *CUNY Student Data Book: Fall 1997* rather than from *U.S. News & World Report*, which reported different rates. One possible explanation for the discrepancy may be that some CUNY colleges did not include SEEK students when they calculated graduation and retention rates for *U.S. News*. Because *U.S. News* obtained the CUNY data from the individual CUNY colleges rather than from CUNY’s central Institutional Research office, each college was free to interpret the magazine’s request in its own way. (Telephone conversation with David Crook, CUNY Institutional Research, 3-26-99.)

In the middle of the pack in terms of graduation rates are Hunter, N.Y. City Tech, and John Jay, where rates ranged between 26% and 31%. As for freshman retention rates, Hunter (75%) and Lehman (70%) were in the middle of the pack.

CUNY's Medgar Evers College had the lowest graduation rate in the group, with only 10% of freshmen graduating in six years. The graduation rates at Lehman, York, and City College were about double that. York College finished last in freshman retention, at only 61%, with Medgar Evers not far behind, at 68%. Only three of the peer institutions – Northeastern Illinois, University of Texas at El Paso, and Chicago State – had comparably low graduation and freshman retention rates.

(5) Comparison with other public systems' top colleges

PwC also identified public university systems that are comparable with CUNY in terms of location and number of campuses and complexity of operations. According to *U.S. News & World Report*, each of these systems has one or more campuses that rank in the "first tier" and two or more that rank in the "second tier."⁵³ Table 9, below, compares the graduation and freshman retention rates of those first- and second-tier colleges with the same rates for CUNY's non-comprehensive senior colleges. The table is intended to give the reader a sense of the improvements in graduation and retention rates that would be needed to help boost one or more of CUNY's senior colleges into a higher tier. CUNY currently has three second-tier campuses (Baruch, Brooklyn, and Hunter), but no first-tier campuses.

Table 9 shows that the graduation rates of CUNY's senior colleges range from 22% to 41%, while the other systems' top campuses have rates that range from 29% to 79%. Baruch and Staten Island – the colleges with the highest graduation rates in the CUNY system – nevertheless have lower graduation rates than the majority of the peer systems' top colleges. The table also shows that CUNY's freshman retention rates range from 61% to 85%, compared with a range of 65% to 91% at peer systems' top colleges. On this measure, four CUNY colleges – Baruch, Brooklyn, City, and Staten Island – compare favorably with the majority of the peer systems' top colleges.

⁵³ *U.S. News* tier designations are determined based on seven factors, weighted as follows:

- (1) academic reputation - 25%;
- (2) graduation rate and freshman retention rate - 20-25%;
- (3) faculty resources - 20%;
- (4) student selectivity - 15%;
- (5) financial resources - 10%;
- (6) alumni giving - 5%; and
- (7) "graduation rate performance" - 5%.

(*U.S. News & World Report*, "America's Best Colleges" (1999), 34-35.)

Table 9. Graduation and Freshman Retention Rates of CUNY (Non-Comprehensive Senior Colleges) and System Peers (Top-Tier[†] Colleges).

System/College	6-Year Grad. Rate (%)	Fall-to-Fall Freshman Retention Rate[‡] (%)
CUNY	22 - 41	61 - 85
Baruch	41	82
Brooklyn	36	80
City	21	85
Hunter	31	75
Lehman	22	70
Queens	37	78
Staten Island	41	80
York	22	61
California State University	31 - 56	73 - 86
Cal Poly - San Luis Obispo	56	86
Cal Poly - Pomona	39	81
Chico	53	79
Fresno	48	80
Fullerton	43	78
Hayward	n/a	79
Long Beach	31	80
Sacramento	41	78
Stanislaus	43	73
University of Massachusetts	37 - 61	71 - 79
Amherst	61	79
Boston	37	71
Dartmouth	49	74
SUNY	37 - 79	70 - 91
Albany	66	83
Binghamton	79	91
Buffalo	59	84
Fredonia	68	80
Geneseo	79	91
New Paltz	53	75
Oswego	60	78
Plattsburgh	61	77
Purchase	37	70
Stony Brook	50	82
Texas A & M University	29 - 69	65 - 87
College Station	69	87
Corpus Christi	n/a	65
Galveston	29	69
University of Wisconsin	45 - 73	71 - 91

Eau Claire	54	77
La Crosse	47	79
Madison	73	91
Oshkosh	47	72
Platteville	51	77
River Falls	45	71
Stevens Point	51	74
Whitewater	59	75

Sources: *U.S. News* (retention rates (see footnote 52) & peer system graduation rates); CUNY Student Data Book: Fall 1997, Vol. II, 87-99 (CUNY graduation rates); PwC Report III, 18 (list of peer systems).

† First or second tier, as classified by *U.S. News*.

‡ Average rate for 1993-1996 entering freshmen.

b) Community Colleges and Associate Degree Programs

In this section, we compare the retention and graduation rates of CUNY's community colleges and associate degree programs with one another, and with comparable statistics for three sets of neighboring or peer institutions: other colleges in New York State; other large, urban community colleges that have a high percentage of minority students; and the national average for public two-year colleges.

- (1) Trend data and comparison with other colleges in N.Y. State

Table 10, below, shows shifting trends in graduation rates for CUNY's associate programs over the last two decades. Four-year graduation rates declined approximately three and one half points in the 1980s, from 20.1% for the entering class of 1978, to 16.7% for the entering class of 1982. CUNY's four-year graduation rates subsequently bounced back from their low point, to hover around 17% or 18%.

Table 10. Percent of Fall First-Time Full-Time Entrants to Associate Degree Programs Graduating at the Same Institution Within Four Years⁵⁴

	New York Statewide *	CUNY	SUNY	New York Independent	New York Proprietary
1978	45.2	20.1	43.5	53.4	52.1
1980	43.0	19.6	41.0	51.6	53.0
1982	42.4	16.7	41.1	45.5	49.1
1984	38.0	18.2	36.6	42.0	43.8

⁵⁴ To enhance comparability of figures within the table, we have used data from a single source. Note that the CUNY figures we obtained from New York State Education Department are, in general, somewhat higher than the figures published in CUNY's CUNY Student Data Book: Fall 1997, Vol. II, 44, 86.

1986	37.7	17.0	35.9	37.7	49.5
1988	33.3	16.8	37.5	40.2	34.7
1990	31.5	17.8	35.3	28.7	39.2
1992	30.1	17.1	33.2	38.1	31.4

Source: NYS Education Department, Office of Higher Education, Research and Information Systems, Nov. 1998, “Graduation Rates and Onschedule Rates.”

*1978-1986: Percentage calculated excluding CUNY.

Four-year graduation rates at SUNY and in the independent and proprietary sectors currently average around 34% – approximately double the rate at CUNY. Table 10 also shows that CUNY’s four-year graduation rates have remained remarkably stable in comparison with those of SUNY and New York State’s independent and proprietary higher education sectors, which have seen drops of between 10 and 20 percentage points over the last two decades.

(2) Comparison by race

At CUNY, retention and graduation rates for associate students vary significantly by race and ethnicity. Table 11 shows that, while more than one-third of white associate entrants graduate within eight years, only just over one-quarter of black and Hispanic students do. In other words, the graduation rate of CUNY’s white associate entrants is 7 to 8 percentage points above that of their black and Hispanic cohorts. Put yet another way, after eight years, white students were almost 25% more likely to have graduated than black students, and almost one-third more likely to have graduated than Hispanic students.

Racial and ethnic graduation patterns varied enormously across the individual comprehensive and community colleges. BMCC had the most consistent graduation rates across racial and ethnic lines, with just over one-quarter of all students graduating in eight years. N.Y. City Tech had the widest gap: graduation rates for black and Hispanic students were only slightly higher than the CUNY-wide average, but graduation rate of white students was 41% -- the highest for any group. Kingsborough and LaGuardia had the highest black and Hispanic graduation rates – about one-third – while John Jay and Medgar Evers had the lowest – around 18%.

Table 11. Eight-Year Retention and Graduation Rates, by Race and Ethnicity: Fall 1990 First-Time Full-Time Associate Entrants

	Race/Ethnicity	% Still Enrolled	% Graduated
CUNY	White	4.1	34.3
	Black	5.4	27.5
	Hispanic	4.4	26.0
BMCC	White	4.9	25.4
	Black	4.7	26.4
	Hispanic	3.9	26.5
Bronx	White		
	Black	5.1	26.8
	Hispanic	3.5	25.3
Hostos	White		
	Black	5.1	25.5
	Hispanic	4.3	19.3
John Jay	White	4.2	21.2
	Black	7.2	18.2
	Hispanic	4.4	17.6
Kingsborough	White	3.4	40.5
	Black	4.6	37.0
	Hispanic	4.2	31.5
LaGuardia	White	3.3	37.4
	Black	4.2	32.3
	Hispanic	4.4	33.4
Medgar Evers	White		
	Black	7.4	17.4
	Hispanic		
N.Y. City Tech	White	2.5	41.0
	Black	6.2	28.7
	Hispanic	4.4	28.2
Queensboro	White	4.7	30.8
	Black		
	Hispanic		
Staten Island	White	5.3	30.0
	Black	15.4	21.8
	Hispanic	8.6	27.6

Source: CUNY Institutional Research, 4-15-99.

* Shaded area indicates there were fewer than 50 students in entering cohort.

Although directly comparable data were not available, it appears that racial and ethnic disparities in graduation rates are more pronounced at CUNY than in the nation as a whole. Table 12 shows that, at CUNY, white students were 24.7% more likely to have graduated within eight years than black students, compared with a 17.3% black-white gap in five-year graduation rates nationwide. Even more strikingly, white students were 31.9% more likely to have graduated from CUNY within eight years than Hispanic students, whereas at the national level, white students were 1.8% *less* likely than Hispanic students to have graduated within five years.

More research is needed to determine the reason for these disparities and whether CUNY could take steps to reduce them. The Task Force staff suspects that CUNY could substantially increase graduation rates by strengthening its certificate programs, which currently enroll very few students.

Table 12. Racial and Ethnic Gap in Graduation Rates of Two-Year College Entrants: CUNY (Eight-Year Rate) vs. National (Five-Year Rate)

	CUNY (Eight-Year Rate)			National (Five-Year Rate)		
	8-Yr. Grad. Rate of Fall 1990 Full-Time Entrants (%)	Percentage Points Below White Students' Rate	% by Which White Students' Rate Exceeds	5-Yr. Grad. Rate of 1989-90 Entrants (%)*	Percentage Points Below White Students' Rate	% by Which White Students' Rate Exceeds
White	34.3	--	--	37.3	--	--
Black	27.5	6.8	24.7	31.8	5.5	17.3
Hispanic	26.0	8.3	31.9	38.0	+ 0.7	-1.8

Sources: CUNY Institutional Research, 4-15-99; NCES 98-015.

* National figures are for students who attained certificate or associate degree at any institution. Note that CUNY awards a comparatively tiny number of certificates; the vast majority of CUNY undergraduates enroll instead in associate or bachelor's degree programs.

(3) Comparison with peer colleges

The next comparison is between CUNY's associate-degree-granting colleges and a group of peer institutions identified by PwC in collaboration with RAND and the Task Force staff.⁵⁵

Due to a lack of available data, it is difficult to make any comparisons between CUNY's retention and graduation rates and those of peer institutions. Table 13, below, gives a college-

⁵⁵ The peer institutions were selected according to the following criteria:

- They are public, rather than private, institutions, and are part of a larger system.
- They offer a level of instruction (Carnegie class) similar to CUNY's community colleges.
- They have a large enrollment.
- A high percentage of their students are members of racial or ethnic minorities.

See PwC Report I, page 16, for more information.

by-college comparison of the ratio of the average number of degrees awarded annually versus the average annual enrollment in credit-bearing programs. The table shows that, at most of the CUNY colleges, as well as Malcolm X College and Miami-Dade Community College, the ratio of degrees awarded to enrollment is between 10% and 20% – in other words, for every 10 students enrolled in a given year, one or two students graduate that same year. (Theoretically, in a two-year system, 50% of enrollees should graduate each year.) The ratio at John Jay, Medgar Evers, and Staten Island, as well as at the Community College of Denver, Delgado Community College, and San Antonio College, is below 10%.

Table 13. Freshman Retention, Degrees Granted, and Graduation Rates of CUNY's Associate-Degree-Granting Colleges and Peers

Community College	4-Semester Retention Rate † (%)	Degrees Granted to Enrollment*		Graduation Rate (%) †	
		Ratio	%	3-Yr.	4-Yr.
CUNY Comprehensive Sr. Colleges		2,000 : 21,300	9		
John Jay	54	100 : 2,000	5	2	6
Medgar Evers	67	200 : 3,000	7	1	5
N.Y. City Tech.	58	1,300 : 10,000	13	8	18
Staten Island	64	400 : 6,300	6	3	9
CUNY Community Colleges		7,600 : 55,000	14		
BMCC	57	1,900 : 15,600	12	8	18
Bronx Community	60	900 : 7,200	13	5	14
Hostos	65	500 : 4,200	12	6	14
Kingsborough	57	1,600 : 9,100	18	18	26
LaGuardia	56	1,500 : 9,700	15	7	18
Queensborough	57	1,200 : 9,100	13	8	16
Peer Community Colleges					
Malcolm X College (Chicago)		500 : 4,400	11		
Community College of Denver		700 : 10,000	7		
Delgado C.C. (New Orleans)	37	1000 : 14,000	7	2	4
Miami-Dade Community College		6,300 : 47,500	13		22
San Antonio College	56**	800 : 20,700	4		

Sources: CUNY Student Data Book: Fall 1997, Vol. I, 18, 124; Vol. II, 92-105; City Colleges of Chicago website; Community College of Denver website, "About the College,"; Office of Institutional Research, Delgado Community College, Continuing Students, Cohort Tracking and Retention (Jan. 1998); Delgado Community College website, "Current Statistics" and "Graduates"; Miami-Dade Community College website, "Fact Book"; San Antonio College website, "Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness."

* Ratio is the average number of certificates and associate degrees granted annually vs. average annual enrollment in credit-bearing certificate and associate degree programs, rounded to the nearest hundred. Percent is based on this ratio.

** 3-semester retention rate.

† CUNY rates are for 1993 first-time, full-time freshmen.

(4) Comparison with other U.S. public two-year colleges

Finally, we compared five-year graduation rates of CUNY's first-time full-time associate entrants with the same information for public two-year colleges nationwide. Table 14, below, shows that Kingsborough's overall graduation rates exceeded the national average for first-time full-time entrants, as did Kingsborough's and LaGuardia's associate degree attainment rates. However, all other CUNY colleges underperformed the national average.

Table 14. Percent of Full-Time First-Time Associate Entrants[‡] Graduating at the Same Institution[†] Within 5 Years.

Institution	Did Not Graduate (Incl. drop-out, transfer, still enrolled) (%)	Graduated: Certificate or Bachelor's Degree* (%)	Graduated: Associate Degree (%)
National Public 2-year			
All first-time entrants	77.8	5.0	17.2
Full-time first-time entrants only	68.7	5.4	25.9
CUNY Comprehensive Sr. Colleges			
John Jay	92.2	4.2	3.6
Medgar Evers	92.5	2.6	4.9
N.Y. City Tech.	76.5	0.4	23.1
Staten Island	80.3	9.1	10.6
CUNY Community Colleges			
BMCC	80.7	1.0	18.3
Bronx Community	81.7	0.5	17.8
Hostos	84.7	0.2	15.1
Kingsborough	67.1	0.9	32.0
LaGuardia	71.8	1.1	27.1
Queensborough	78.9	1.0	20.1

Sources: The Condition of Education 1998, 54; CUNY Student Data Book: Fall 1997, Vol. I, 140 & Vol. II, 92-105.

[‡] National figures are for 1989-90 entrants; CUNY figures are for 1990 entrants.

[†] CUNY figures indicate graduation from any CUNY college.

* This column reports certificate data for national public 2-year colleges and bachelor's data for CUNY. Because it awards so few undergraduate certificates, CUNY does not publish certificate attainment data; in 1996-97, CUNY's community and comprehensive senior colleges granted a total of just 259 certificates, compared with 9,305 associate degrees.

If we compare CUNY's full-time entrants with all entrants nationwide (not just those who started full-time), every CUNY college except John Jay, Medgar Evers, Staten Island, and Hostos outperformed the national average for associate degree attainment. This is an apples-to-oranges comparison, but it is interesting in view of the fact that the percentage of CUNY community college students who attend full-time is double the national average.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ CUNY Student Data Book: Fall 1997, Vol. I, 171.

2. Goal: General Learning or Self-Improvement; Outcome Measure:
Student Follow-Up Survey Results

Data availability. CUNY launched its first comprehensive survey of all associate and bachelor's degree recipients in January of 1999. The survey will gather detailed information on, among other things, graduates' perceptions of their training at CUNY. Results were not yet available at this writing.

While most of the individual CUNY colleges have conducted at least one comprehensive student follow-up survey within the past several years, only a handful appear to do so regularly.⁵⁷ The colleges do not use a consistent format for survey questions or reporting results, but a preliminary review of reports reveals that most of the surveys focus on the value of the college experience in preparing graduates for a job or further education. None (except the one described in the following paragraph) focused on students who left CUNY prior to graduating.

The only student satisfaction survey we received that reported detailed information on the value of the college experience in helping students improve themselves or acquire general knowledge was conducted in 1998 by CUNY's Graduate Center. The survey focused on a sample of students who began attending BMCC in Fall 1994 or Fall 1995 but left before completing a degree.⁵⁸

Data analysis. In the BMCC survey, approximately one-quarter of all respondents reported a primary reason for enrolling other than to earn a degree, to improve their position in the job market, or to prepare for further study.⁵⁹ This group of students arguably falls into the "general learning or self-improvement" category (see Table 1, above). Unfortunately, however, the BMCC survey data does not match students' original goals to their outcomes, so we cannot assess whether this particular group of students' goals were met.

Approximately 30% of all BMCC respondents reported a primary benefit of attending BMCC other than earning a degree, improving their position in the job market, or preparing for further study. They reported benefits ranging from learning or improving specific skills, improving their English, or making networking contacts, to discovering an interest in a new subject, improving their self-esteem, or making new friends. Another one-quarter of respondents reported that

⁵⁷ The colleges that seem to be most systematic and comprehensive are York (interesting analysis of academic and career goal attainment), John Jay, LaGuardia, and Queens. By contrast, Brooklyn, City, and Medgar Evers could provide no student follow-up survey data. (Ruth Weisgal, "Graduation Surveys" memo and accompanying materials, 4-21-99.)

⁵⁸ Marilyn Gittel & Tracy Steffy, *The Benefits of College Attendance: A Case Study of BMCC* (New York: Howard Samuels State Management and Policy Center, Graduate School and University Center, CUNY) Oct. 1998.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

they had gotten no benefit from attending BMCC.⁶⁰ The racial breakdown was “virtually the same” for the students who benefited and those who did not.⁶¹

3. Goal: Improving Position in the Job Market

a) **Outcome Measure: Professional and Licensing Examination Results**

The New York State Education Department (the “SED”) licenses 38 professions, of which the following 23 do not require graduate study – and, in some cases, do not even require a college degree.⁶²

acupuncture	midwifery
athletic training	occupational therapy
certified public accounting	ophthalmic dispensing
certified shorthand reporting	optometry
dental hygiene	pharmacy
dietetics/nutrition	physical therapy
interior design	physician assistance
land surveying	professional engineering
landscape architecture	respiratory therapy
registered nursing	teaching
licensed practical nursing	veterinary technology
massage therapy	

The Task Force staff sought data on the performance of CUNY students on the licensing exams for these professions. We sought data that (1) covered multiple years – to enable us to observe trends; (2) included only first-time test takers – to afford the tightest possible connection between a CUNY education and performance on the test; and (3) included test results for other test-takers in New York State and the U.S. – to enable us to compare the performance of CUNY students. We succeeded in collecting data on the nursing, teaching, and public accounting exams, which are the professional exams that CUNY students are most likely to take.

The following subsections present two to five years of pass rates on exams for registered and licensed practical nursing, teaching, and public accounting generated by first-time candidates from CUNY, New York State, and the United States. We analyze pass rates for each population for change over time and in relation to one another. The analysis indicates that

⁶⁰ Ibid., 17-18.

⁶¹ Ibid., 20.

⁶² Robert Bentley, Director, Office of the Professions, Division of Professional Licensing Services, SED, 8-10-98 and 3-17-99.

CUNY students under-performed their peers on nursing and teaching exams, but out-performed their peers on the public accounting exam.

Data availability. The Task Force staff found that CUNY’s central offices do not maintain data on its students’ performance on professional licensing exams – except for the two nursing categories, for which the state compiles exam results and sends them to institutions automatically, free of charge. It is particularly striking that, at the time we made our requests, CUNY’s central office files did not contain pass rates on the New York State Teacher Certification Examinations (“NYSTCE”) – which are compiled by the SED and are also available free of charge – despite the fact that eight of CUNY’s senior colleges have teacher preparation programs.

Because the central administration did not have data, they asked the individual colleges to compile responses to our requests.⁶³ Not counting nursing, teaching, and certified public accounting, the colleges provided data on only 14 programs, and useful data on only eight.⁶⁴ N.Y. City Tech provided the most data, covering four programs.⁶⁵ Baruch, City, Queens, and Medgar Evers provided no data at all.⁶⁶ In Subsection (5), “Other programs,” we identify the programs with the best performance of those for which we had useful data.

Interestingly, neither CUNY nor the individual colleges could provide any data on certified public accounting – even though eight of CUNY’s senior colleges have accounting programs; even though there is a perennial demand for accountants in the local economy;⁶⁷ and even though student performance data for the Uniform CPA Examination (“CPA Exam”) are readily available – the National Association of State Boards of Accounting publishes test results annually. The CUNY colleges also provided no data on the disciplines of land surveying, landscape architecture, physician assistance, and professional engineering.

Because we were unable to obtain adequate data from CUNY, we sought data from the SED and from national professional associations. In this way, we succeeded in collecting data on the teaching and public accounting exams.

⁶³ Weisgal faxes dated February 4, 8 and 16 and March 4 and 8, 1999.

⁶⁴ In general, the Task Force staff only accepted data that covered multiple years – to enable us to observe trends – and that included only first-time test takers – to give the tightest connection between a CUNY education and test performance. Much of the information we received from the colleges did not meet these requirements. In one notable case, a college forwarded estimates of what it *believed* to be the record of its students (Diane Camilleri, LaGuardia, memorandum dated 1-27-99).

⁶⁵ (Fred W. Beaufait, President, New York City Technical College, 2-11-99.) In addition to providing data on several programs licensed by the SED, N.Y. City Tech included results on the licensing exam for radiologic technology, which is administered by a national board.

⁶⁶ Examples of the reasons the colleges gave for not forwarding data include the fact that a license is not strictly required for practice (Barbara Astone, LaGuardia, 1-27-99) and that the SED had not provided the college with data (Camilleri memorandum, 1-27-99).

⁶⁷ In 1997, for example, the finance, investment, and real estate sector accounted for one-third of New York City’s wages in 1997, and the business services sector accounted for about 9% of the city’s jobs. (*The City University of New York: An Institution Adrift* (Report of Mayor Giuliani’s Advisory Task Force on the City University of New York, 1999).)

(1) Registered Nursing

CUNY programs and applicable exam. The following CUNY colleges have academic programs that lead to professional licensure in registered nursing (“RN”): Hunter, Lehman, Medgar Evers, N.Y. City Tech, Staten Island, BMCC, Bronx, Hostos, Kingsborough, LaGuardia, and Queensborough. (City College also had a program, but it was recently closed.) Graduates take the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (“NCLEX-RN”).

Academic and clinical pre-requisites. In order to sit for the NCLEX-RN, one must have graduated from a degree program that is registered by the SED. Programs at both the associate and bachelor’s levels can lead to RN licensure. New York State law sets minimum standards for the number of hours of nursing courses and duration of study, including clinical experience, that prepare students for licensure. As part of the RN licensing process, colleges are required to send official lists of nursing graduates to the State, validating that each student on the list has satisfied the academic and clinical requirements for graduation.⁶⁸

Benchmark and data analysis. Table 15, below, shows that, for every year since 1995, CUNY’s pass rate on the NCLEX-RN has lagged behind the state and national pass rates. Over the period, the CUNY pass rate dropped 14 percentage points, from 86% to 72%. At the same time, the New York State rate dropped only two points, and the U.S. rate dropped only six points. Thus, not only did the CUNY pass rate drop in absolute terms, it also dropped in relation to the state and national pass rates. At the beginning of the period, the CUNY rate was within five points of the state and national pass rates; by 1998, however, the CUNY rate was 15 points lower than the state rate and 13 points lower than the U.S. rate.

New York State’s Office of Professional Education Program Review, which oversees the quality of nursing education programs, considers an 80% pass rate a reasonable goal and considers a two- to three-year period of declining success rates “cause for concern.”⁶⁹ Under these criteria, all of CUNY’s RN programs except Hunter’s give cause for concern. In 1998, only Hunter, Staten Island, and Queensborough had pass rates of 80% or better, but Staten Island’s and Queensborough’s pass rates have been in decline for at least three years. By contrast, pass rates at Lehman, BMCC, and Bronx have been climbing, but they have still not broken 80%. Pass rates at N.Y. City Tech, Medgar Evers, Hostos, Kingsborough, and LaGuardia (and at City, whose program has since been closed) are below 80% and falling.

⁶⁸ Hassett memo, 3-2-99.

⁶⁹ Gail A. Rosettie, Coordinator of Professional Education, SED, letter to Miriam Cilo dated 12-29-98.

Table 15. Pass Rates of First-Time Candidates on NCLEX-RN

Population	1995	1996	1997	1998
	%	%	%	%
CUNY	86	79	75	72
Hunter	79	82	80	89
Staten Island	98	92	89	82
Queensborough	98	91	89	81
LaGuardia	81	82	80	77
Lehman	78	62	70	73
BMCC	87	74	65	72
Kingsborough	84	82	78	71
Bronx	81	75	65	68
N.Y. City Tech	85	82	70	68
Medgar Evers	47	51	72	62
Hostos	94	75	84	48
City	80	70	55	39
NYS	89	86	83	87
U.S.	91	88	88	85

Source: Professional Education Program Review, SED.

(2) Licensed Practical Nursing

CUNY programs and applicable exam. Medgar Evers and Bronx Community have academic programs that lead to professional licensure in licensed practical nursing (“LPN”).⁷⁰ Graduates take the National Council Licensure Examination for Licensed Practical Nurses (“NCLEX-LPN”).

Academic and clinical pre-requisites. In order to sit for the NCLEX-LPN, a candidate must hold at least a high school diploma and have completed a program that is registered by the state. A candidate may substitute completion of an LPN preparatory program with an educational equivalent, such as completion of three semesters of an associate- or bachelor-level nursing program. As part of the LPN licensing process, the institution must verify that the applicant completed academic and clinical requirements set by the state.⁷¹

Benchmark and data analysis. Each year, the CUNY pass rate lagged behind the state and national pass rates. Over the period, CUNY’s pass rate dropped 33 percentage points, from 92% to 59%. At the same time, the state rate dropped only one point, and the U.S. rate dropped only three points. Thus, not only did the CUNY pass rate drop in absolute terms, it also dropped in relation to the state and national pass rates. At the beginning of the period, the

⁷⁰ CUNY does not regard Bronx Community’s LPN program as one of its undergraduate offerings because the program is a non-certificate program offered only through the college’s continuing education division (Hassett memo, 3-2-99). We include it here nevertheless, both because prospective students may not make this distinction, and because we want to present the program’s excellent results.

⁷¹ Ibid.

CUNY rate was higher than the both the state and national rates; at the end, the CUNY rate was 23 points lower than the state rate and 28 points lower than the U.S. rate.

CUNY’s dramatic drop is due to the poor performance of candidates from Medgar Evers, whose pass rate was low enough to offset the strong pass rate of Bronx Community’s students. Between 1995 and 1998, Medgar Evers’ pass rate dropped from 68% (15 points below the state rate and 22 points below the U.S. rate) to 50% (more than 30 points below the state and national rates). By the standards of New York State’s Office of Professional Education Program Review (described in the preceding section), the low level and persistent decline of Medgar Evers’ LPN pass rates give double “cause for concern.”

Table 16. Pass Rates of First-Time Candidates on NCLEX-LPN

Population	1995	1996	1997	1998
	%	%	%	%
CUNY	92	84	70	59
Medgar Evers	68	68	55	50
Bronx CC	100	98	95	91
NYS	83	83	85	82
U.S.	90	91	89	87

Source: Professional Education Program Review, SED.

(3) Teaching

CUNY programs and applicable exam. The following CUNY colleges have teacher preparation programs: Brooklyn, City, Hunter, Lehman, Queens, York, Medgar Evers, and Staten Island. Graduation from a teacher preparation program is not required to take the New York State Teacher Certification Examination (“NYSTCE”); graduates of all CUNY bachelor’s programs are eligible (for example, even though Baruch does not have a teacher preparation program, dozens of its graduates have taken the NYSTCE in recent years).

The NYSTCE has three written parts, each of which is scored separately:⁷²

- the Liberal Arts and Sciences Test (“LAST”), which covers general knowledge in science and math, history and social science, arts and humanities, communication skills, and writing;
- the Assessment of Teaching Skills-Written (“ATS-W”), which covers education theory, child development, instructional planning and assessment, instructional delivery, and the professional environment; and

⁷² SED website; *The Best Test Preparation for the NYSTCE* (Piscataway, N.J.: Research & Education Association) 1998. The “Assessment of Teaching Skills-Performance,” which is required for permanent certification, consists of a video of the candidate in an actual classroom setting; we have no data on the ATS-P.

- the Content Specialty Tests (“CSTs”) and Language Proficiency Assessments (“LPAs”), which are grouped together.

The LAST and ATS-W are both required for provisional certification. In general, the CSTs and LPAs are only required for candidates seeking permanent certification.⁷³

Academic and clinical pre-requisites. There are no academic or clinical pre-requisites for taking the NYSTCE. The SED recommends that the LAST be attempted toward the sophomore year of college; that the ATS-W be attempted in the junior or senior year; and that the CSTs be attempted after the coursework for the major or area of concentration has been completed.⁷⁴

There is no limit on the number of times a person may retake the NYSTCE tests. Once a qualifying score is achieved on a given test, it may be used to satisfy that portion of the requirement.⁷⁵

Benchmark and data analysis. In this subsection, we analyze two sets of data. First, we look at three years’ worth of NYSTCE results for all test takers in New York State, which are presented in Table 17. Next, we analyze the most recent year’s results for those test takers who were recommended for certification by their college; those results are presented in Table 18.

For the past three years, the State has reported NYSTCE results for all test takers, by institution and exam part. The State’s decision to report results for all test takers has recently come under fire. Some CUNY officials have argued that they should not be held accountable for the test results of students who have not completed all the requirements of the teacher preparation program; officials hypothesize that students who fail the exams may be, for example, beginning students who are taking the exam for practice or to get a sense of their potential.⁷⁶

Nevertheless, on the assumption that these data have been collected and calculated in the same manner for in all three years and for all colleges in the state, we believe it is fair to report the data here – to enable the reader to observe trends over time and to compare self-identified CUNY test takers with the rest of New York State.

Table 17 shows that, in each year, the CUNY-wide pass rates on each part of the NYSTCE were well below the New York State average – by 16-21 points on the LAST, by 14-18 points on the ATS-W, and by 4-6 points on the CST/LPA. Considering that CUNY is the

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Edith Hunsberger, Associate in Professional Examinations Department, Office of Teaching, SED, 2-24-99.

⁷⁵ SED website.

⁷⁶ Hassett phone conversations, April 1999; Karen W. Arenson, “Tests Suggest Gains by CUNY in its Programs for Teaching,” *NYT*, 4-12-99, B1.

single largest supplier of teachers and other pedagogues to the BOE, the relatively poor performance of self-identified CUNY test takers is alarming.⁷⁷ It may be some consolation that, over the period, CUNY has narrowed the gap by gaining eight points on the LAST and five points on the ATS-W over the period, while losing only two points on the CST/LPA.

Students who identified themselves as affiliated with Queens, Hunter, Staten Island, Baruch, and Brooklyn have consistently had the highest pass rates within CUNY. For each of the three years, however, students who said they were from York, Medgar Evers, and City had pass rates on some parts of the exam in the 50% range or lower. This is particularly disturbing in view of the fact that the single largest group of CUNY NYSTCE-takers identified themselves as City College students.

Table 17. Pass Rates on the NYSTCE by Program Year, Exam Part, and CUNY College or Institution Type

	1995-96			1996-97			1997-98			
	%	%	%	%	%	%	# testers	%	%	%
	LAST	ATS- W	CST/LP A	LAST	ATS- W	CST/LP A	LAST	LAST	ATS- W	CST/LP A
CUNY	62	71	82	64	74	82	4,464	70	76	80
Queens	83	88	89	88	92	93	806	90	92	91
Hunter	83	88	93	78	88	92	556	87	91	92
Staten Island	78	85	95	83	89	87	272	85	87	87
Baruch*	79	83	85	77	86	86	100	37	86	90
Brooklyn	74	80	82	71	80	79	785	78	80	78
Lehman	57	66	78	59	68	75	539	63	74	80
York	57	63	77	52	63	43	182	58	66	81
City	40	48	76	40	49	70	1,097	49	53	65
Medgar Evers	39	51	50	41	58	75	127	47	61	58
SUNY	95	97	89	95	97	90	4,325	96	97	89
Independent	87	91	87	87	93	87	9,830	89	93	88
All NY Inst'ns	83	89	86	84	90	86	18,634	86	90	86

Source: SED Office of Teaching, NYSTCE “1997-98 Statewide Institutional Results Summary” and “Annual Institution Results Report” for the 1995-96 and 1996-97 Program Years; letters from Gerald W. Patton to CUNY college presidents, March 1999.

* Baruch does not have a teacher preparation program.

Beginning in November 2000, the New York State Board of Regents is planning to deregister teacher education programs whose graduates do not pass each part of the NYSTCE at a rate

⁷⁷ A large portion of the BOE’s workforce comes from CUNY teacher preparation programs. The press reports 80% and the BOE reports 27%. (Cilo & Cooper, *Bridging the Gap Between School and College*)

of 80%.⁷⁸ The SED has not yet defined the terms or established the regulations that will govern the implementation of this policy.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, based on the data presented in Table 17, there has been widespread speculation that CUNY's teacher education programs are likely to be deregistered. Thus, at the request of CUNY and other institutions, the SED has provided the 1997-98 NYSTCE data not only in the old format, but also in a new format that some CUNY officials have argued is a better reflection of their schools' quality (see Table 18).⁸⁰

Table 18, below, gives the number of students that institutions "recommended for a teaching certificate," as well as the percent of those students who successfully completed all the tests required for that credential. According to the SED, institutions were given total discretion in determining which students to recommend. At one extreme, institutions could have recommended all students who completed the teacher preparation course requirements; at the other, they could have recommended only those students who had already passed the NYSTCE. In between, institutions may have required students to achieve a minimum GPA, or to demonstrate proficiency in student teaching, or to pay any outstanding tuition balances, or to satisfy any number of other requirements. The SED believes that the CUNY colleges fell somewhere in between the two extremes, but that they did not all follow the same protocol.⁸¹

The numbers in Table 18 paint CUNY in a very different light than do the numbers in Table 17. Notably:

- the total pass rate for each CUNY college is above the 80% benchmark;
- Medgar Evers has moved from the bottom of the list to the top; and
- the total number of students recommended by CUNY represents less than two-thirds of all CUNY LAST takers.

At SUNY and the state's independent colleges, by contrast, there is only a small difference between the Table 17 and Table 18 pass rates, and the total number of recommended students is 16% greater than the number of LAST takers. It is not known why the patterns at CUNY are so different from the rest of the state, but the SED and CUNY have advanced a variety of possible reasons for CUNY's high ratio of test takers to recommended students:⁸²

⁷⁸ Regents Task Force on Teaching, Teaching to Higher Standards: New York's Commitment, 7-16-98, 24-25; Joseph Frey, SED, phone conversation, 11-13-98; see also *NYT*, 7-18-98 and 11-14-98.

⁷⁹ (Edith Hunsberger, Associate in Professional Examinations Development, Office of Teaching, SED, phone conversations, 3-18-99, 3-19-99, and 4-1-99 (citing "indecision . . . from the Commissioner on down"); Hassett phone conversations, April 1999.

⁸⁰ Arenson, *NYT*, 4-12-99, B1.

⁸¹ Phone conversation with Joseph Frey, SED, 4-12-99; see also Arenson, *NYT*, 4-12-99, B1, at B3.

⁸² Phone conversation with Joseph Frey, SED, 4-12-99; Hassett phone conversations, April 1999.

- in view of CUNY’s low graduation rates, it seems likely that a disproportionate number of CUNY’s LAST takers never complete teacher preparation program requirements and are therefore never recommended for certification;
- it may be that CUNY candidates, unlike those from SUNY and the independent colleges, take the NYSTCE multiple times before passing;
- because the SED has not yet issued regulations that require an institution to recommend for certification all students who completed the teacher preparation courses, it is possible that some CUNY colleges chose not to recommend students whom they believed had a poor chance of passing the NYSTCE, despite the fact that these students had completed all the necessary courses.

Regardless of these differences, however, Table 18, like Table 17, shows CUNY with overall pass rates four to eight points below SUNY and the state’s independent institutions.

Table 18. NYSTCE Pass Rates for Recommended Students, by Certification Level and CUNY College or Institution Type

College	Provisional Certification		Permanent Certification		Total	
	Number	% Passing	Number	% Passing	Number	% Passing
CUNY	2,111	91	736	89	2,847	91
Medgar Evers	76	100	0	--	76	100
Lehman	99	100	66	95	165	98
Staten Island	198	98	98	96	296	97
York	61	95	0	--	61	95
Baruch*	37	97	9	78	46	93
Hunter	314	95	127	86	441	92
Queens	615	90	205	91	820	90
Brooklyn	494	89	98	85	592	89
City	217	79	133	84	350	81
SUNY	5,149	95	1,250	96	6,399	95
Independent	8,222	97	1,837	97	10,059	95
All NY Inst’ns	15,482	96	3,823	95	19,305	95

Source: CUNY Office of Academic Affairs, fax dated 4-5-99.

* Baruch does not have a teacher preparation program.

The SED has cautioned that the numbers in Table 18 should not be used to predict how CUNY’s teacher preparation programs will fare under the new deregistration policy, for at least two reasons. First, as mentioned earlier, the SED has not yet decided exactly what the policy

requires or how it will be implemented; in particular, regulations will likely require institutions to “recommend” all students who complete their teacher preparation course requirements and received or already possessed a bachelor’s degree.⁸³ Thus, institutions’ pass rates will probably not be calculated in the same way that these numbers were calculated. Second, the SED is slated to phase in higher passing scores on each part of the NYSTCE over a three-year period, beginning with the 1998-99 program year;⁸⁴ pass rates may decline accordingly.⁸⁵

(4) Certified Public Accounting

CUNY programs and applicable exam. The following CUNY colleges have accounting programs: Baruch, Brooklyn, Hunter, Lehman, Medgar Evers, Staten Island, Queens, and York. Graduates may take the Uniform CPA Examination, which has four sections: auditing; business law and professional responsibility; financial reporting of business enterprises; and financial reporting for taxation and public enterprises.

Academic and clinical pre-requisites. According to New York law, undergraduate accounting studies leading to certification must include accounting principles, commercial law, finance, business statistics, liberal arts and science, and business and accounting electives.⁸⁶ Students may not take the CPA exam until they are within 60 days of receiving their bachelor’s degree.⁸⁷

Benchmark and data analysis. Since candidates must pass all four sections of the CPA exam in order to be certified, passing all four sections in one sitting is a benchmark of excellence. Table 19 shows that, between 1993 and 1997, the four-section pass rate for CUNY graduates has consistently exceeded the national average. Over the period, the CUNY pass rate dropped five percentage points, from 20% to 15%. At the same time, the U.S. pass rate also dropped five percentage points, from 17% to 12%. Thus, although the CUNY pass rate dropped, it continued to exceed the U.S. pass rate by three percentage points.

Students from Baruch, Brooklyn, Queens, and York have passed all four sections at rates exceeding the national average in at least three of the past five years. Baruch and Queens have the largest programs, but they have seen both the size of their programs and their four-section pass rates decline between 1993 and 1997. Brooklyn’s program is slightly smaller than Queens’, and is also shrinking, but Brooklyn’s pass rates have risen to more than double the

⁸³ Phone conversation with Joseph Frey, SED, 4-12-99.

⁸⁴ Sample letter from Gerald W. Patton, SED, to institutions, dated 4-9-99.

⁸⁵ This scenario is disturbingly similar to what is occurring regarding the Regents’ new high school graduation requirements. In both situations, the State seems to have established a strict policy, on a relatively short implementation timeline, with a potentially enormous impact on students and institutions – without first working out the specifics. This creates an environment of uncertainty that can only frustrate institutional and individual planning efforts. (See Cilo & Cooper, *Bridging the Gap Between School and College*)

⁸⁶ Part 52.13, Chapter II, *Regulations of the Commissioner*.

⁸⁷ Ruth Weisgal, “Accounting exam,” e-mail to Miriam Cilo dated 3-4-99.

national average over the same period. Meanwhile, York’s small program has maintained a very good four-section pass rate.

By contrast, the small-to-medium-sized programs at Hunter, Lehman, and Staten Island have seen their four-section pass rates fall well below the national average, and Medgar Evers’ virtually non-existent program has a virtually non-existent pass rate to match.

Table 19. Pass Rates of First-Time Candidates* on All Four Sections of CPA Exam

Population	1993		1994		1995		1996		1997	
	# testers	% passing								
CUNY	855	20	710	19	677	19	523	17	550	15
Baruch	364	21	272	18	293	20	262	16	274	15
Brooklyn	107	21	99	31	78	19	68	25	68	31
Hunter	63	19	38	16	55	7	32	13	42	2
Lehman	43	14	24	13	36	11	24	4	25	0
Medgar Evers	7	0	6	0	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a
Staten Island	50	14	38	11	18	6	0	n/a	11	8
Queens	192	21	192	19	168	23	122	17	118	11
York	29	21	41	12	29	21	15	13	12	25
U.S.	36,475	17	33,978	16	32,429	16	32,521	15	33,395	12

Source: National Association of State Boards of Accounting.

*Data include only those candidates whose highest level of education was a bachelor’s degree.

(5) Other programs

The CUNY colleges also provided useful data on several smaller programs. Areas of strength included: N.Y. City Tech’s radiologic technology⁸⁸ and dental hygiene programs; the dietetics/nutrition programs at Brooklyn and Lehman; York’s occupational therapy program; and Hunter’s physical therapy program. All of these programs maintained an average pass rate for first-time test-takers on the applicable licensing exam of at least 80% for the last two or more years.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ In addition to providing data on several programs licensed by the SED, N.Y. City Tech included results on the licensing exam for radiologic technology, which is administered by a national board. (Fred W. Beaufait, President, New York City Technical College, 2-11-99.)

⁸⁹ (Ruth Weisgal, “CUNY Performance on State Licensing Exams,” fax dated 2-4-99.) We selected 80% as a level indicating program strength because the SED applies that benchmark to teacher preparation and nursing programs.

b) Outcome Measure: Job Placement Survey Results

Data availability. Under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act (“VATEA”), CUNY is required to survey all associate and certificate degree recipients in vocational programs, to determine their employment and educational status six months after graduation. CUNY has conducted this survey for every graduating cohort since 1992-93, and we were given data for the most recent five years.

CUNY has never systematically collected job placement data for its bachelor’s students. CUNY launched its first comprehensive survey of all associate and bachelor’s degree recipients in January of 1999. The survey will gather detailed information on, among other things, occupational and educational status. Results were not yet available at this writing.

Many of the CUNY colleges have conducted independent surveys asking graduates to comment on the value of the college experience in preparing them for employment. We have not reported those results here, due to inconsistent collection and reporting formats and lack of benchmarking data. One survey is of special interest, however, because of its unique focus on the experiences of students who left CUNY before completing a degree. We have reported the employment data from this survey, which covers a sample of “leavers” who began attending BMCC in Fall 1994 or Fall 1995.

Finally, CUNY central and the individual colleges (except York) each supplied the Task Force staff with a written description of their job placement and follow-up practices.⁹⁰

Benchmark and data analysis. Each year, CUNY surveys its students who earned certificates or associate degrees in vocational programs during the most recent period to determine their employment status. Survey results for the 1993-94 through 1997-98 academic years are presented in Table 20, below. The table shows that the employment rate for CUNY’s vocational graduates inched upwards from 68% in 1993-94 to 72% in 1995-96, at which point it reached a plateau. The percentage of vocational graduates employed in a field that was, to a greater or lesser extent, related to their training also rose slightly, from 47% to 48%, while the percentage who were not employed but were continuing their education slipped

⁹⁰ Most of CUNY’s job placement is campus-based (Lester Jacobs, “Job Placement,” memorandum to Patricia Hassett, 3-22-99); indeed, most of CUNY’s contacts with employers are at the individual department level (Bronx; N.Y. City Tech; see also 8-18-98 Responses, 20). About a half dozen of the colleges report that they have only been placing students or collecting job placement data for a few years, while a handful say they have been operating placement offices and systematically collecting data for a decade or more. The colleges typically collect information from students and employers who use the services of their career office, and use some combination of mail, fax, and telephone surveys of current and graduating students, alumni, and local employers. Many of the colleges report that they have recently begun or are planning to implement computer-based job placement or information collection systems, using e-mail, Internet websites, touch-screen kiosks, etc. (Memoranda and faxes to Lester Jacobs and Roberta Nord from individual college placement directors.)

CUNY’s two centralized job-placement programs are (1) the Big Apple Job Fair, at which only 20% of participants are recent alumni; and (2) the Job Locator and Development Program, which finds part-time work study positions for current students. (Lester Jacobs, “Job Placement,” memorandum to Patricia Hassett, 3-22-99; 1999 Big Apple Job Fair brochure.)

from 18% to 16%. Finally, the proportion of graduates who were neither employed nor in school dropped from 14% to 12%.

Although the “not employed/not in school” rate of CUNY’s vocational graduates has not fallen below New York City’s 1997-98 unemployment rate of 8%, CUNY’s employment outcomes have been improving over time. Moreover, if we consider that the VATEA program is intended to serve special populations who would not otherwise possess the skills needed to find employment, the 72% employment rate of CUNY’s vocational graduates appears to be a very positive outcome.

Table 20. Employment Status of Graduates of CUNY Certificate and Associate Vocational Programs: 1993-94 Through 1997-98

Academic Year	% Employed	Subtotal Employed in Training-Related Field (%)**	% Not Employed/ Still in School	% Not Employed/Not In School
1993-94	68	47	18	14
1994-95	70	47	17	14
1995-96	72	48	17	12
1996-97	72	48	16	12
1997-98	72	48	16	12

Sources: CUNY Institutional Research, 3-22-99 and 4-15-99.

* Row totals for unshaded columns may not equal 100 due to rounding.

** Employment in a field that is “directly” or “slightly” related to training.

Table 21 shows that there was considerable variation among the colleges in terms of the success of their 1996-97 vocational graduates in finding employment. John Jay graduates far outpaced the field: six months after graduation, 92% of John Jay graduates were employed, and two-thirds had obtained training-related employment. At the majority of the colleges, about three-quarters of graduates had found employment, and about half of graduates were in training-related jobs. The colleges whose graduates fared least well were Bronx, Medgar Evers, and Hostos: only about two-thirds were employed; only about 40% of graduates had training-related jobs; and between 15% and 20% were neither employed nor in school.

Table 21. Employment Status of 1996-97 Graduates of CUNY Certificate and Associate Vocational Programs*

Colleges	% Employed	Subtotal Employed in Training-Related Field (%)**	% Not Employed/ Still in School	% Not Employed/Not In School
CUNY Total	72	48	16	12
John Jay	92	67	4	4
Queensborough	76	53	15	9
N.Y. City Tech	75	50	17	9
Kingsborough	74	50	20	6
BMCC	73	44	15	11
Staten Island	73	52	12	15
La Guardia	72	53	15	13
Bronx	67	41	19	15
Medgar Evers	62	40	21	17
Hostos	62	42	19	20

Source: CUNY Institutional Research, 3-22-99.

* Row totals for unshaded columns may not equal 100 due to rounding.

** Employment in a field that is “directly” or “slightly” related to training.

Whereas the data in the preceding tables cover CUNY graduates, a 1998 survey by CUNY’s Graduate Center sought to determine what happened to CUNY students who left before completing a degree. The survey focused on a sample of “leavers” who had begun attending BMCC in Fall 1994 or Fall 1995.⁹¹ Ten percent of respondents reported that the primary benefit they had reaped from their attendance was finding a job, or a better job, or earning more money at their current job.⁹² While fewer than half of respondents had been employed when they began college, approximately 70% reported that they were employed at the time of the survey. The most common fields were clerical, secretarial, and data entry (19%); retail (7%); health care (6%); and banking and accounting (5%).⁹³

If we compare the results of the VATEA survey with the BMCC study findings, we see that students who left BMCC before completing a degree (70% employed) were employed at roughly the same rate as BMCC’s 1996-97 vocational graduates (72% employed).

⁹¹ The sample was not randomly selected. Instead, the researchers reported results for all 118 students whom the researchers succeeded in contacting and interviewing. (Gittell & Steffy, 28.)

⁹² Ibid., 17.

⁹³ Ibid., 21.

4. Goal: Preparing for Further Study

a) **Outcome Measure: Transfer Rates**

Data availability. The Task Force staff attempted to provide data on transfer rates, but was ultimately unable to do so due to the poor quantity and quality of information available. We explored data from three sources:

- This year, for the first time ever, the National Student Loan Clearinghouse has made available data on Fall 1991 and 1992 bachelor's entrants and Fall 1994 and 1995 associate entrants who were still enrolled in a participating college as of 1994 or later. Unfortunately, the data do not include students who transferred after Fall 1992 but left college prior to 1994, or students who transferred to a non-participating college. Moreover, the data only cover two cohorts for each degree type, making it impossible to analyze trends.⁹⁴
- Data on Fall 1991 associate freshmen who transferred to bachelor's programs within CUNY are reported in the CUNY Student Data Book: Fall 1997,⁹⁵ but CUNY does not report internal transfer data for students who transferred from one CUNY associate program to another; students who transferred from one CUNY bachelor's program to another; or students who transferred from a CUNY bachelor's program to a CUNY associate program.
- Finally, self-reported data on CUNY Fall 1990 first-time bachelor's and community college entrants who transferred outside of CUNY prior to completing a degree were compiled in a series of papers written by CUNY Professor David E. Lavin and colleagues.⁹⁶ Unfortunately, however, the transfer rates reported by the Student Loan Clearinghouse were significantly lower than those reported by Lavin, leading CUNY officials to conclude that the rates reported in the Lavin studies were probably inflated by response bias.⁹⁷

For these reasons, we concluded that we could not provide any transfer rate data. We are optimistic that the Student Loan Clearinghouse data will improve in the near future, enabling CUNY to learn from the transfer patterns of its students.

⁹⁴ David Crook, "Calculation of Graduation Rates Using the Leavers' Study and Clearinghouse Data," memo to Patricia Hassett dated 4-30-99.

⁹⁵ CUNY Student Data Book: Fall 1997, Vol. I, 121.

⁹⁶ David E. Lavin *et al.*, Graduation Rates of CUNY's Community College Students: The Influence of Time and Transfer, May 1997; David E. Lavin *et al.*, The Social Construction of Graduation Rates: Conceptions of College Completion and Their Socio-Political Implications, 3-24-97.

⁹⁷ For example, Lavin projected a transfer rate of 24% for the Fall 1990 bachelor's cohort, compared with the Clearinghouse figure of 13.7% for the Fall 1992 bachelor's cohort. (David Crook, "Calculation of Graduation Rates Using the Leavers' Study and Clearinghouse Data," memo to Patricia Hassett dated 4-30-99; Hassett phone conversation, 4-16-99.)

b) Outcome Measure: Graduate Admissions Test Results

Data availability. The Task Force staff found that CUNY’s central offices did not maintain data on its students’ performance on graduate admissions tests such as the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), and the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT). Archiving practices of the individual senior colleges ranged from nonexistent – at Brooklyn, Lehman, Medgar Evers, Queens, and York; to uneven – at Baruch, City, Hunter, and John Jay, which have kept data on one or two of the tests for two to 19 years; to relatively comprehensive – at Staten Island, which has archived data on all four tests since the early 1990s.⁹⁸

Because it was impossible to get complete data from CUNY, the Task Force staff sought to obtain data from the respective testing agencies – with very limited success. Educational Testing Service (“ETS”) officials repeatedly promised, but never provided, GMAT data. CUNY obtained GRE data from ETS on the Task Force’s behalf, but failed to forward it to us in time to meet our publication deadline. CUNY provided sufficient LSAT data to permit some analysis, and we obtained comprehensive MCAT data from the American Association of Medical Colleges.

(1) Law School Admission Test (LSAT)

The test. The LSAT is a standardized test required for admission to most U.S. law schools. It provides a standard measure of logical reasoning, analytical reasoning, and reading comprehension skills that law schools can use as one of several factors in assessing applicants.⁹⁹

Data availability. Four colleges – Baruch, Hunter, Queens, and Staten Island – were able to provide multi-year LSAT score data. Brooklyn, City, Lehman, Medgar Evers, and York do not archive LSAT data and provided none to the Task Force staff, and John Jay provided only an average of several years’ scores.

Benchmark and data analysis. LSAT scores are reported on a scale of 120 to 180. The average score band is 149-151, but most competitive law schools look for candidates with scores that are significantly higher.¹⁰⁰ Table 22, below, gives the LSAT scores of the 1998 entering classes of each law school in New York City.

⁹⁸ Weisgal, “Data on LSAT and Archiving of GRE, GMAT, and MCAT,” fax dated 4-6-99.

⁹⁹ (Law School Admission Council website, <http://www.lsac.org>; Princeton Review website.) There is a writing sample, but it is not scored.

¹⁰⁰ Kaplan website; Princeton Review website.

Table 22. 25th-75th Percentile LSAT Scores of the 1998 Entering Class: New York City Law Schools

Law Schools in New York City	1998 LSAT Score 25 th -75 th percentile
New York University	166-171
Columbia University	164-171
Fordham University	160-165
Yeshiva University (Benjamin Cardozo)	154-159
Brooklyn Law School	152-158
St. John's University	151-158
New York Law School	151-156
CUNY School of Law at Queens College	142-152
Touro College (Jacob D. Fuchsberg)	144-151

Source: U.S. News Online, "Graduate Rankings, Law."

Table 23, below, shows that the mean LSAT scores of CUNY students from Baruch, Hunter, Queens, and Staten Island have been converging on the mid-140s. Since 1992-93, Hunter's average scores have fallen from 151 to 145; Queens' have decreased from 150 to 148, just below the national average; and Baruch's have slipped from 147 to 146. Meanwhile, Staten Island's scores have climbed from 133 to 145. Assuming that students who take the LSAT go on to apply to law school, the average applicant from a CUNY college would be in the bottom half of the entering class at CUNY's own law school, which, in turn, has among the lowest LSAT scores of any law school in the country.¹⁰¹

Table 23. Average LSAT Scores, By College and Year*

	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Baruch	n/a	147	147	n/a	n/a	146
Hunter	151	150	148	147	145	n/a
Queens	150	151	149	148	n/a	n/a
Staten Island	133	137	n/a	152	145	145

Sources: Faxes from colleges to Ruth Weisgal, dated April 1999.

* At both Hunter and Queens, the only colleges that supplied the number of their students who took the LSAT, those numbers have been declining each year since 1992-93. Hunter has gone from 89 to 47 test takers, and Queens has gone from 205 to 166.

¹⁰¹ U.S. News Online, "LSAT Scores."

(2) Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)

The test. The MCAT is used by medical schools, in the admissions process, as a “common yardstick for comparing candidates.” It consists of a writing sample, plus three multiple choice sections: verbal reasoning, physical sciences, and biological sciences.¹⁰²

Data availability. We obtained five years’ worth of data, 1993-1997. Approximately 400 CUNY students took the MCAT each year: Brooklyn and City each typically had about 90 testers, Hunter and Queens each had about 70, Lehman and York each had 20-30, and Baruch, Staten Island, and Medgar Evers each had about a dozen.¹⁰³ Because relatively small numbers of CUNY students took the MCAT, we do not present full tabular data here. The following paragraphs describe the most striking patterns revealed by the data.

Benchmarks and data analysis. The writing sample score data the Task Force staff received was presented in terms of the percent of CUNY students scoring in each of four clusters – each cluster corresponding roughly to a national quartile – for each year from 1993 through 1997. At each CUNY college, the bulk of students – between one-third and one-half – typically scored in the third cluster, which ranged roughly between the 18th and 48th national percentiles.¹⁰⁴

In general, fewer than half of test takers from each CUNY college ever scored in the top half nationally (first or second cluster) on the writing sample. Brooklyn, City, and Queens each had 40%+ in the top half in at least three of the five years. Lehman, Medgar Evers, Staten Island, and York each had 30%+ in the top half in at least three years. Hunter had at least 20%+ in the top half each year, and once Hunter had exactly 50% scoring in the top half. Baruch, with its small number of test takers, had more than half scoring in the first or second quartile in two of the five years. By contrast, other colleges in New York State consistently had between 54% and 59% scoring in the top half.

Finally, at some CUNY colleges, only a very small percentage of students scored in the first cluster (which represents approximately the top 28% of test-takers nationwide). At City, Lehman, Medgar Evers, Staten Island, and York, for example, there were at least two years in which fewer than 10% of test takers scored in the first cluster.

Each of the three multiple choice sections – verbal reasoning, physical sciences, and biological sciences – is scored on a scale of 1 (low) to 15 (high).¹⁰⁵ The national mean on each section hovers close to 8.0, but the scores of entering students at New York City’s top medical schools average between 10.5 and 11.3.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² American Association of Medical Colleges, “MCAT: Explanation of Scores for Advisors.”

¹⁰³ American Association of Medical Colleges, “MCAT Counts and Scores Summarized for CUNY,” fax dated 3-26-99.

¹⁰⁴ “MCAT Counts and Scores Summarized for CUNY.”

¹⁰⁵ “MCAT: Explanation of Scores for Advisors.”

¹⁰⁶ U.S. News Online, “Graduate Rankings, Medicine.”

On the verbal reasoning section, every CUNY college underperformed both the national mean and the state mean (which was one- to two-tenths of a point higher) each year. Brooklyn students consistently outperformed students from all other CUNY colleges, remaining within about one point of the national mean. Queens and Hunter students were not far behind, with mean scores within about 1.5 points of the national average. Medgar Evers and York had the lowest mean scores, 3 to 4 points below the national average.¹⁰⁷

On the physical sciences section, Brooklyn students outperformed the national average and were within one-tenth of a point of the New York State average each year. The other CUNY colleges all underperformed both the national and state averages every year. Medgar Evers' mean score, consistently 2.5 to 3.5 points below the national average, was by far the lowest.¹⁰⁸

On the biological sciences section, Brooklyn students outperformed or equaled the national average in four of the five years, and remained within half a point of the New York State average. Again, the other CUNY colleges all underperformed both the national and state averages each year. And again, Medgar Evers' mean score was by far the lowest, at 2.5 to 4 points below the national average.¹⁰⁹

C. Remediation Outcome Data

This section reviews the data that are available to demonstrate the effectiveness of CUNY's remedial programs, at both the community college and senior college levels. Table 24, below, shows that CUNY has produced no reliable data demonstrating remedial students' skill gains; little data to demonstrate that remediation is effectively supporting college-level programs; and no data demonstrating that remediation is meeting students' needs (except one study that suggests just the opposite).¹¹⁰ The bulk of the data that CUNY has produced addresses the question whether remedial students are moving quickly into college-level work. Given the potential loss of tuition revenue that would be associated with dismissing students who fail to complete their remedial obligations within the prescribed period, however, combined with the lack of objective, university-wide remediation exit standards, those data are arguably unreliable indicators of the effectiveness of CUNY's remedial programs.

¹⁰⁷ "MCAT Counts and Scores Summarized for CUNY."

¹⁰⁸ *Id.*

¹⁰⁹ *Id.*

¹¹⁰ Because RAND's analysis has raised questions about the reliability of grading at CUNY, we have not included information on course grades in this report. Klein & Orlando, 6, 21 (suggesting that unreliability of CUNY's grading system may be a cause of low correlations of both SAT and FSAT scores with CUNY students' grade point averages).

Table 24. Remediation Goals, Appropriate Outcome Data, and Availability

CUNY's GOALS	APPROPRIATE OUTCOME DATA	AVAILABILITY
Transmitting basic skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre- and post-testing • Follow-up with employers 	Not available (except CLIP)
Effectively supporting college-level programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up surveys, interviews, or focus groups with college-level instructors • Results of studies comparing the performance of students who completed remediation with similar students who enrolled directly in college-level courses • Retention and graduation rates 	Not available (except retention and graduation rates)
Meeting students' remediation needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of studies correlating placement recommendations with course success 	Not available (except CUNY WAT study)
Moving students quickly into college-level work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rates of progress through remedial programs • Credit accumulation rates 	CUNY

Sources: *Open Admissions and Remedial Education at the City University of New York*, Section V.C.1, “The Goals of Remediation at CUNY”; *Assessing Institutional Effectiveness in Community Colleges*, 25-26.

The pattern of data availability is consistent with the Task Force staff’s finding, in the accompanying report, that CUNY’s remedial faculty tend not to see their job as helping students build a solid foundation in basic skills; rather, they tend to view their goal as “jump-starting” underprepared students so they can move as quickly as possible into college-level instruction.¹¹¹

The following subsections are organized to track the goals listed in column one and the types of outcome data listed in column two. We have presented as much data as possible. In those instances when data are unavailable, we comment briefly on this problem.

1. Goal: Transmitting Basic Skills

a) Outcome Measure: Pre- and Post-Testing

Reliable, valid, and fair pre- and post-test data is essential – to determine the progress of individual students; to assess the performance of individual instructors; to compare the effectiveness of various remedial configurations, curricula, and instructional approaches; and to assess the effectiveness of CUNY’s remedial programs.¹¹²

Data availability. CUNY was almost totally unable to provide the Task Force staff with reliable pre- and post-test data for remedial students. Their reasons included, *inter alia*, the fact that CUNY has not maintained a central database of FSAT re-test data until recently, and

¹¹¹ Accompanying report, *Open Admissions and Remedial Education at the City University of New York*, Section V.C.1, “The Goals of Remediation at CUNY.”

¹¹² See accompanying report, *Open Admissions and Remedial Education at the City University of New York*, Section V.B.2.b, “Progress testing, post-testing, exit from remediation, and certification.”

the fact that information on whether students attended certain remedial treatments, such as the winter intersession program, is not available. For these reasons, CUNY concedes that it is “impossible” to determine the effectiveness of the colleges’ various basic skills and ESL treatments, as measured by the difference between initial and follow-up test scores.¹¹³

Moreover, even if CUNY could have provided pre- and post-test data using the FSAT instruments, the usefulness of such information would be seriously in doubt. RAND has found that the WAT has an unacceptably low level of reliability, and that widespread use of the FSATs as both pre- and post-tests has raised serious security problems.¹¹⁴

A notable bright spot is the CLIP program, which uses a range of formal and informal measures to assess the progress of CLIP students, including three sets of pre- and post-tests.¹¹⁵

Data analysis. CLIP pre- and post-tests students using the Michigan Test, a 100-point standardized, objective ESL test. Seventy-eight percent of 1996-97 CLIP students made some gain on the Michigan Test: 22% gained 1-6 points, 23% gained 7-12 points, and 33% gained 12+ points; 22% made no gain. The number of points gained varied directly with the number of hours of participation and inversely with initial score.¹¹⁶

Based in part on the finding that approximately one-quarter of CLIP students made no gain on the Michigan Test, the Office of Academic Affairs suggested that CUNY try to improve its understanding of these students’ learning needs by assessing students’ literacy in their native language.¹¹⁷ Presumably as a result of this process, the CLIP program now administers some Spanish-language tests.¹¹⁸

b) Outcome Measure: Follow-Up With Employers

The Task Force staff is not aware of any employer satisfaction studies (such as surveys, interviews, or focus groups) that assess the basic skills or English language proficiency of students who completed remediation at CUNY. Such information, if it exists or is compiled in

¹¹³ (8-18-98 Responses, 11.) CUNY did provide data comparing the initial and follow-up performance on the FSATs of CUNY Language Immersion Program participants. Because the WAT is fatally flawed as an assessment instrument, however, we do not present those data here.

¹¹⁴ RAND (Klein & Orlando); accompanying report, *Open Admissions and Remedial Education at the City University of New York*, Section V.B, “Assessment.”

¹¹⁵ *CLIP Final Report*, 15-24.

¹¹⁶ (*CLIP Final Report*, Tables 10 & 11.) Because the publisher of the Michigan Test had not established statistically significant gain intervals, CLIP planned to replace the Michigan Test with a test better suited to assessing gains. In the meantime, CLIP set its own gain intervals. (*CLIP Final Report*.)

¹¹⁷ (*CLIP Final Report*, 22.) As we discuss in the accompanying report, CUNY currently has no organized capacity for making such an assessment. (*Open Admissions and Remedial Education at the City University of New York*, Section V.B.2.c.(1), “CUNY’s ESL Assessment System.”)

¹¹⁸ Bronx, interview.

the future, would be useful to determine whether CUNY's remedial programs are successfully transmitting skills to students.¹¹⁹

2. Goal: Effectively Supporting College-Level Programs

a) **Outcome Measure: Follow-Up With College-Level Instructors**

There is anecdotal information to indicate that many college-level instructors are dissatisfied with the results of CUNY's remedial programs,¹²⁰ but the Task Force staff is not aware of any systematic studies (*e.g.*, surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.) aimed at determining whether college-level faculty believe that CUNY's remediation programs are effectively supporting the university's college-level programs.

The absence of this type of information is consistent with the Task Force staff's finding that exit standards for remedial sequences are not designed to be congruent with the level of preparation CUNY's college-level faculty demand for credit-level coursework. Indeed, CUNY has not established meaningful, university-wide standards of readiness for credit-bearing classes. Rather, CUNY's remediation exit standards (such as they are) are typically negotiated by administrators and remediation instructors, based on students' pass rates on the Freshman Skills Assessment Tests ("FSATs"). In addition, exit standards have likely been influenced by a Trustees' resolution forbidding senior colleges to provide more than two semesters of remediation.¹²¹

b) **Outcome Measure: Control Group Studies**

CUNY has not conducted any controlled studies comparing the performance of students who completed remediation with similar students who enrolled directly in college-level courses.¹²² This type of information would be useful to determine whether CUNY's remediation programs enhance students' performance in college-level courses.

¹¹⁹ *Assessing Institutional Effectiveness in Community Colleges*, 25.

¹²⁰ See Task Force staff campus interview files and open forum files.

¹²¹ Accompanying report, *Open Admissions and Remedial Education at the City University of New York*, Section V.B.2.b, "Progress testing, post-testing, exit from remediation, and certification"; see also Traub, Chapter 11 (describing struggle among Trustees, administrators, and ESL instructors over FSAT passing scores, and discussing widespread removal of FSATs as remediation exit tests).

¹²² Hassett meeting, March 1999.

c) **Outcome Measure: Retention and Graduation Rates**

(1) Basic skills vs. non-basic-skills

Basic skills students consistently have lower retention and graduation rates than non-basic skills students. Table 25, below, shows that, among Fall 1995 first-time full-time freshmen, students who took basic skills in their first semester were less likely to be enrolled or graduated four terms after entering than non-basic-skills students, by an average of about five percentage points. At the bachelor’s level, basic skills students were retained at a rate of 69%, compared with 74% of other students. At some colleges, such as Baruch, John Jay, and York, there was almost no difference between the two groups of students, while at others, such as Brooklyn, City, and Staten Island, the retention rate for basic skills students was about ten points lower than for all other students.

At the associate level, the four-semester retention rate of basic skills students was 55%, versus 61% for non-basic-skills students. Again, there were big differences among the colleges. For example, at BMCC, Kingsborough, and LaGuardia, there was almost no difference in retention between the two groups, whereas at N.Y. City Tech, Queensborough, and Staten Island, basic skills students were far less likely than non-basic-skills students to be enrolled in their fourth semester – by ten percentage points or more.

Table 25. Fourth Semester Retention Rates: Comparison of Fall 1995 First-Time Full-Time Freshmen Who Enrolled in a Basic Skills Course in Their First Semester with Those Did Not, by Degree Program and College.*

% Still Enrolled in the 4th Semester					
	Any Basic Skills	No Basic Skills		Any Basic Skills	No Basic Skills
Bachelor’s Entrants	69	74	Associate Entrants	55	61
Baruch	71	72	BMCC	57	58
Brooklyn	66	75	Bronx	53	49
City	65	78	Hostos	55	62
Hunter	77	80	John Jay	50	56
John Jay	67	66	Kingsborough	60	59
Lehman	64	67	LaGuardia	57	58
Queens	73	75	Medgar Evers	51	57
Staten Island	73	84	N.Y. City Tech	49	63
York	60	62	Queensborough	53	63
			Staten Island	57	73

Source: CUNY Institutional Research, Charts 3A & 3B prepared for Judy Watson.

* Data for Medgar Evers bachelor’s entrants are not included due to their small numbers.

Further study could reveal whether differences in retention rates are due to the comparative effectiveness of basic skills programs, differences in the ability of entering students, relatively stricter or more lenient academic progress policies, adequacy of support services, or other factors. Multi-year data would enable each college to analyze trends.

(2) ESL vs. non-ESL

ESL students have much higher retention rates than basic skills students, and in some cases – particularly at the associate level – ESL retention is higher than that of the non-ESL student body. This is probably due, at least in part, to the fact that many foreign students – although they may lack facility with the English language – have had relatively good academic preparation in their home countries.¹²³

Table 26, below, compares Fall 1995 first-time full-time freshmen who took one or more ESL courses in their first semester with those who took no ESL courses. At the bachelor's level, there is wide variation among the colleges. At one extreme are Baruch, Queens, and York, where ESL students were about 10% less likely to be retained or graduated by the fourth semester than non-ESL students. At the other extreme are Hunter and Lehman, where ESL students were retained at a rate 6% higher than non-ESL students.

At the associate level, by contrast, ESL students' retention rate was 11% (six percentage points) higher than that of non-ESL students. At many of the colleges – BMCC, N.Y. City Tech, Queensborough, and Staten Island – ESL students were more than 20% more likely to be retained or graduated by the fourth semester than non-ESL students, but the most dramatic difference was at Medgar Evers, where the ESL retention rate was one-third higher than that of non-ESL students.

¹²³ Watson 11-26-97 memo, 3.

Table 26. Fourth Semester Retention Rates: Comparison of Fall 1995 First-Time Full-Time Freshmen Who Enrolled in an ESL Course in Their First Semester with Those Did Not, by Degree Program and College*

% Still Enrolled in the 4th Semester					
	ESL	No ESL		ESL	No ESL
Bachelor's Entrants	69	72	Associate Entrants	61	55
Baruch	66	74	BMCC	67	55
Brooklyn	73	71	Bronx	51	53
City	70	68	Hostos	59	57
Hunter	83	78	John Jay	59	50
John Jay	63	67	Kingsborough	55	60
Lehman	70	66	LaGuardia	60	56
Queens	65	75	Medgar Evers	67	50
Staten Island	80	79	N.Y. City Tech	63	52
York	56	62	Queensborough	65	52
			Staten Island	76	61

Source: CUNY Institutional Research, Charts 3A & 3B prepared for Judy Watson.

* Data for Medgar Evers bachelor's entrants are not included due to their small numbers.

When we compare Table 26, above, with Table 27, below, we can see that some of the patterns that were beginning to emerge in the fourth semester had intensified after six years, while others seem to have reversed (this comparison is something of a fiction, since the fourth-semester and six-year data are for different entering cohorts). Table 27 shows that, at most CUNY colleges, ESL and non-ESL students had comparable six-year retention rates. At some colleges, however – Hunter, Lehman, BMCC, and Bronx – ESL students were between 11% and 44% more likely to be retained or graduated after six years than non-ESL students.

Table 27. Percent Graduated or Still Enrolled After Six Years: Fall 1990 First-Time Full-Time Bachelor's and Community College Entrants, By ESL Status

% Graduated or Still Enrolled After 6 Years					
	ESL	Non-ESL		ESL	Non-ESL
Bachelor's Entrants			Community College		
Baruch	62	60	BMCC	35	31
Brooklyn	50	54	Bronx	37	31
City	43	46	Hostos	25	26
Hunter	61	50	Kingsborough	36	43
John Jay	37	41	LaGuardia	42	39
Lehman	49	34	Queensborough	32	35
Queens	47	49			
York	36	36			

Source: CUNY Institutional Research, Charts 6A & 6B prepared for Judy Watson.

* Data for Medgar Evers and Staten Island bachelor's entrants not included due to their small numbers.

Finally, ESL students who entered CUNY with a relatively “high” level of language proficiency were retained or graduated at higher rates than those who entered at a “medium” or “low” level.¹²⁴ Table 28, below, shows six-year graduation and retention rates of Fall 1990 first-time full-time entrants by ESL status. Among bachelor’s entrants, high-level ESL students had graduation and retention patterns that were similar to non-ESL students who had passed all three FSATs. Among community college entrants, the retention and graduation rates of high-level ESL students were not quite as strong as those of non-ESL students who had passed all three FSATs, but were stronger than those of the total non-ESL population.

Table 28. Six-Year Graduation and Retention Rates of Fall 1990 First-Time Full-Time Entrants, By ESL Status

	ESL				Non-ESL	
	Low* ESL	Mediu m* ESL	High* ESL	Total ESL	Total Non- ESL	Subtotal – Passed All FSATs
Bachelor’s Entrants						
% Graduated	19	25	40	30	32	42
% Still Enrolled	24	20	16	19	17	14
% Not Enrolled	58	55	45	51	52	44
Comm. Coll. Entrants						
% Graduated	17	28	35	26	27	43
% Still Enrolled	9	9	8	8	8	8
% Not Enrolled	74	64	57	66	64	49

Source: CUNY Institutional Research, Charts 6A & 6B prepared for Judy Watson.

*“Low,” “medium,” and “high” ESL designations made by CUNY’s ESL Task Force and campus ESL coordinators, in cooperation with CUNY Institutional Research.

** Columns may not total 100 due to rounding.

(3) Successful vs. unsuccessful remedial students

Table 29, below, shows that remedial students who passed all their first-semester basic skills or ESL courses in Fall 1988 were almost equally likely to be enrolled or graduated eight years after entering as non-remedial students. By contrast, remedial students who did not pass all their first-semester basic skills or ESL courses were far less likely than either of the first two groups to be enrolled or graduated eight years later, by a margin of approximately 20 percentage points. Based on these data, the successful completion of remedial courses appears to be more predictive of retention than whether a student initially places into remediation.

¹²⁴ “Low,” “medium,” and “high” ESL designations were made by CUNY’s ESL Task Force and campus ESL coordinators, in cooperation with CUNY Institutional Research. Since CUNY does not test ESL students in their native languages, these level designations probably reflect a combination of English proficiency and basic skills. (Watson 11-26-97 memo.)

Table 29. Retention and Graduation After Eight Years, by Performance in First-Semester Basic Skills and ESL Courses: Fall 1988 First-Time Full-Time Freshmen*

	Bachelor's Entrants			Associate Entrants		
	% Graduated	% Still Enrolled	% Not Enrolled	% Graduated	% Still Enrolled	% Not Enrolled
Basic Skills						
Took None	48	5	47	34	5	62
Passed All	43	8	49	37	5	58
Didn't Pass All	23	10	67	15	6	80
ESL						
Took None	40	7	53	30	5	65
Passed All	45	6	50	31	5	64
Didn't Pass All	34	7	59	16	4	80

Source: Basic Skills & ESL Overview, Table 12.

* Rows may not total 100 due to rounding.

(4) Average number of equated credits attempted

Table 30, below, shows that a student's first semester remedial courseload (as measured by the number of equated credits attempted) is predictive of retention. The table shows the average number of equated credits attempted by Fall 1995 freshmen in their first semester of enrollment, according to their retention status as of Spring 1997.

At the bachelor's level, students who left CUNY in bad academic standing had attempted heavier remedial loads than their classmates, on average; the only exceptions were at Hunter, Medgar Evers, and York. In addition, at the comprehensive senior colleges – John Jay, Medgar Evers, and Staten Island – those bachelor's students who had left in good standing (possibly transferring to another college) had, on average, lower remedial courseloads than those who were still enrolled. By contrast, at senior colleges with stronger academic reputations – Baruch, Brooklyn, Hunter, and Queens – students who left in good standing averaged the same or more equated credits than those who were still enrolled in the fourth semester.

At the associate level, there were two different patterns. At John Jay, Kingsborough, Medgar Evers, and Queensborough, students who left in bad standing averaged the heaviest remedial courseloads; those who were still enrolled were in the middle; and those who left in good standing had attempted the lightest remedial courseloads. By contrast, at BMCC, Bronx, Hostos, LaGuardia, and N.Y. City Tech, students who left in bad standing had, on average, attempted fewer equated credits than one or both of the other groups.

Table 30. Mean Equated Credits Attempted in First Semester of Enrollment by Fall 1995 First-Time Freshmen, by Fourth-Semester Retention Status

	Still Enrolled	Not Enrolled, Left in Good Standing	Not Enrolled, Left in Bad Standing		Still Enrolled	Not Enrolled, Left in Good Standing	Not Enrolled, Left in Bad Standing
Bachelor's Entrants	3.5	3.5	4.2	Associate Entrants	7.0	6.9	7.0
Baruch	4.8	5.0	5.3	BMCC	6.8	6.2	6.5
Brooklyn City	3.6	3.6	5.5	Bronx	9.4	8.9	9.1
Hunter	4.8	4.6	5.0	Hostos	10.6	11.0	10.4
John Jay	2.4	2.5	2.4	John Jay	4.0	3.5	4.1
Lehman	3.5	2.5	3.6	Kingsborough	5.4	4.9	5.6
Medgar Evers	2.4	2.2	2.6	LaGuardia	10.4	9.5	9.5
Queens	8.2	4.5	6.2	Medgar Evers	6.0	5.1	6.1
Staten Island	1.9	1.9	2.3	N.Y. City Tech	5.4	6.3	6.1
York	2.1	1.9	3.5	Queensborough	8.2	7.5	8.7
	7.4	7.2	7.3	Staten Island	3.4	2.9	3.9

Source: CUNY Institutional Research, 4-19-99 (8-18-98 Responses, Attachment B-2-F).

3. Goal: Meeting Students' Remediation Needs; Outcome Measure: Results of Studies Correlating Placement Recommendations With Course Success

The Task Force staff is aware of only one study correlating CUNY's remedial placement recommendations with course success, and the preliminary results of that study have been negative – in other words, they have been interpreted to suggest that CUNY's method of remedial placement is not serving students properly.

In theory, the passing scores on the FSATs should separate students into two distinct groups in terms of readiness for college courses.¹²⁵ In order to test this theory and to determine whether remedial writing students can be successfully mainstreamed into freshman composition, CUNY's Office of Academic Affairs is conducting a "pilot study," which is comparing the grades, credit accumulation, and retention of students who received a marginally failing score of six on the WAT with those who received a marginally passing WAT score of eight (it is not possible to receive a seven on the WAT). The "eight" students were placed in regular sections of freshman composition; the "six" students, rather than being placed in remedial writing, were placed directly in "special sections" of freshman composition, augmented with tutoring, supplemental instruction, or other academic support activities.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ See RAND (Klein & Orlando).

¹²⁶ Weisgal, fax dated 4-12-99.

In July 1998, CUNY's Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs testified in court that the study's preliminary results indicate that the students who initially scored a six on the WAT and passed the RAT did almost as well in college courses as those who initially scored an eight on the WAT.¹²⁷ CUNY was unable to provide any data to support the Vice Chancellor's testimony, however; officials stated that the results of the pilot will not be available until the summer of 1999.¹²⁸

4. Goal: Moving Students Quickly into College-Level Work

a) **Outcome Measure: Rates of Progress Through Remedial Programs**

Since the Trustees enacted limits on the number of semesters bachelor's students could spend in remediation,¹²⁹ CUNY has generated much data on student rates of progress through remediation. Given the financial disincentives against dismissing students who fail to complete their remedial obligations within the prescribed period, we doubt that these data are reliable indicators of the effectiveness of CUNY's remedial programs.

Furthermore, any attempt to compare rates of progress would be complicated by the fact that students' remedial obligations differ by college and among degree programs and majors within the same college. For example, Lehman mainstreams remedial writing and reading students, and Baruch "camouflages" remedial students in tutorials, making it impossible to tell how long it takes these students to improve their skills.¹³⁰

An even more fundamental problem is the lack of objective, university-wide remedial exit standards. Since each college is free to determine when students are ready to exit from basic skills courses, exit requirements vary considerably.¹³¹ Consequently, a student who is still in remediation at one college might have been deemed ready for credit-level work at another.

For these reasons, this Part does not present data on student progress through remedial programs.

¹²⁷ *Crain v. Reynolds*, Testimony of Louise Mirrer, 819-22, 856-58, 866.

¹²⁸ Weisgal, fax dated 4-12-99.

¹²⁹ The Trustees enacted this new policy in June of 1995. See accompanying report, *Open Admissions and Remedial Education at the City University of New York*, Section III.I.2, "Admissions Standards and Limits on Remediation."

¹³⁰ See accompanying report, *Open Admissions and Remedial Education at the City University of New York*, Section V.A.3, "The Basic Configuration of Remediation at CUNY."

¹³¹ See accompanying report, *Open Admissions and Remedial Education at the City University of New York*, Section V.B.2.b, "Progress testing, post-testing, exit from remediation, and certification."

b) Outcome Measure: Credit Accumulation Rates

Table 31, below, shows the average number of degree credits earned per semester by Fall 1995 first-time freshmen who failed one or more of the FSATs, compared with those who passed all three FSATs. The table shows that, over the course of four semesters, students who passed all three FSATs on their initial attempt were able to earn, on average, about three more credits per semester than students who initially failed one or more of the FSATs.¹³²

After four semesters, bachelor's students who failed one or more of the FSATs had, on average, only accumulated 30 credits – just one-fourth of the 120 credits needed to earn a bachelor's degree. Moreover, they were more than 11 credits – almost a full semester – behind students who had passed all three FSATs (at CUNY, 12 credits per semester is a full-time load). Similarly, associate students who failed one or more of the FSATs had, on average, earned only 24 credits by the end of four semesters – just 40% of the 60 credits needed for an associate degree – and they were almost 13 credits behind students who had passed all three FSATs.

The lowest credit accumulation rates among students who had failed one or more of the FSATs were at Bronx and Medgar Evers. After four semesters, these students had, on average, accumulated only about 20 credits of the 60 needed for an associate degree.

The college where failing one or more FSATs made the most difference was Kingsborough, where remedial students earned an average of 4.0 fewer credits per semester than students who had passed all three FSATs; after four semesters, remedial students were, on average, 16 credits behind. The college where failing one or more of the FSATs made the least difference in credit accumulation was Hostos, where remedial students earned an average of just 0.8 fewer credits per semester than students who had passed all three FSATs; after four semesters, Hostos' remedial students were, on average, just three credits (about one course) behind their peers.

¹³² Note that students who fail one or more of the FSATs typically take one or more remedial courses, which do not carry a full complement of degree credits.

Table 31. Average Credits Earned Per Semester, Fall 1995-Spring 1997, by FSAT Outcomes, College, and Degree Program: Fall 1995 First-Time Freshmen

	Passed All FSATs	Failed 1 or More		Passed All FSATs	Failed 1 or More
Bachelor's Entrants	10.3	7.5	Associate Entrants	9.2	6.0
Baruch	10.0	7.0	BMCC	8.9	5.5
Brooklyn	10.4	6.8	Bronx	8.3	4.8
City	10.5	7.1	Hostos	7.9	7.1
Hunter	10.4	9.0	John Jay	7.7	5.9
John Jay	10.2	7.7	Kingsborough	11.5	7.5
Lehman	10.1	8.4	LaGuardia	9.0	6.6
Medgar Evers	--	5.4	Medgar Evers	8.5	5.0
Queens	10.5	7.5	N.Y. City Tech	8.9	6.1
Staten Island	11.2	9.9	Queensborough	8.1	5.2
York	9.5	6.9	Staten Island	8.4	6.5

Source: CUNY Institutional Research, 8-18-98 Responses, Attachment B-8.