

October 22, 2019

Félix V. Matos Rodríguez
Chancellor
The City University of New York

2019-20 PMP Goals

Dear Chancellor Matos Rodríguez,

I write to provide you with an update on the progress we continue to make as a college community, and to set forth goals for the next four years in support of our strategic plan, and [90X30 Challenge](#), which aims to double by 2030 the total number of degrees and high-quality credentials earned by our students, from 45,000 to 90,000.

My tenure as President of Lehman College began shortly after the end of our fiftieth anniversary celebration and on the heels of our [Middle States Commission on Higher Education \(MSCHE\) self-study](#), which concluded with our full reaccreditation. The totality of both of these efforts lasted the duration of the previous academic year. Together they offered the campus community a unique opportunity to reflect on its history and recent achievements, and to lay the foundation for our next half-century. It was against that backdrop that we began the process of sunsetting our most recent strategic plan, [Achieving the Vision](#), while also launching our [ongoing 2020-2025 strategic planning process](#), which will include the following goals developed as part of the Performance Management Process (PMP).

Six-Year Graduation Rate: Forty-nine percent of full-time, first-time students who entered Lehman in Fall 2012 graduated in six years, which represents a twelve-percentage point increase in comparison to the graduation rate for the 2008 students cohort (37.1%). At the same time, we are keenly aware that more is left to be done in support of our students. In light of that, as part of our ongoing strategic planning process, we will aim to increase our six-year graduation rate to 60% for the Fall 2018 first-time, full-time student cohort. **In support of this, and as part of the PMP, we will increase our six-year graduation rate from 49% to 54% for the Fall 2016 entering cohort.**

Four-Year Graduation Rate: Lehman College has seen its four-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time students similarly improve in recent years. Full-time, first-time students who arrived at Lehman in Fall 2014 graduated at a rate (28.2%), which was nearly ten percentage points higher than 2010 full-time, first-time students (18.7%). We will continue our efforts to improve this.

As part of the PMP we aim to increase our four-year graduation rate by three percentage points to 31% for Fall 2018 full-time, first-time students. This will feed into our strategic plan goal to increase our four-year graduation rate to 33% for our Fall 2020 cohort.

Retention: Like many other senior colleges, Lehman will need to stabilize and reverse recent declines in one-year retention rates in order to improve the likelihood that we will achieve our graduation rate goals. Between Fall 2015 and Fall 2017, the College experienced a five-percentage point drop in its one-year retention rate, from 85.7% to 80.7%, according to the most recent PMP data. In light of that, and **as part of the PMP, Lehman will strive to increase its one-year retention rate to 84% for the Fall 2021 full-time first-time student cohort.** Doing so will propel us towards our strategic plan goal to increase the one-year retention rate to 86% for the Fall 2023 cohort.

Momentum: In addition to one-year retention rates, the pace of credit accumulation during freshmen year is an early indicator of on-time graduation. Lehman has steadily improved the percent of fall full-time first-time students who earned thirty credits or more in the first year by almost ten percentage points, from 44.5% for Fall 2013 entering freshmen, to 54.3% for Fall 2017 entering freshmen. In an effort to sustain this momentum, and **as part of the PMP, the College will seek to increase from 54% (Fall 2017) to at least 60% (Fall 2021), the percent of freshmen earning thirty or more credits during their first year.** This goal will feed into the strategic planning goal, which is in the process of being set. In support of our goals related to graduation, retention, and momentum, we plan to employ a number of strategies which are described below.

Improvements to the process of awarding credits earned during high school (AP, ECI, College Now, and Bridge Programs) have positively impacted the awarding of credit earlier in a student's career and mitigating credit loss. Currently 49% of incoming freshmen enroll with earned college credits. This number is expected to increase, and we plan to continue to identify new ways to award credit in ways that promote retention, momentum, and ultimately, graduation.

Additionally, the College has received funding to support two Accelerate, Complete, and Engage (ACE) cohorts over the next two years. Just recently we welcomed our first cohort of 124 full-time, first-time students, and another 150 will join us in Fall 2020. The program, which provides students with more engaged advising, career counseling, and financial support will help ensure that students not only are retained after one year, but maintain a pace to graduate within four-years. The College is also engaged with Bottom Line, a program which is committed to the development of strong connections with students by providing them with individual support, and ensuring they have the guidance they need to persist and earn a college degree. The tailored guidance provided by Bottom Line ensures that students are equipped with the skills and knowledge to overcome obstacles, persist, and eventually graduate with a career plan in place.

As the profile of our freshmen class continues to evolve, the need to evaluate approaches to freshmen schedules has grown, and Lehman continues to evaluate this as well as its Freshmen Learning Communities. Enrollment of students who bring extensive amounts of college coursework into the freshman year has led to an institutional commitment to engage in an

ongoing assessment of course offerings to ensure that we are able to maintain freshman learning communities while offering students appropriate courses. These efforts will continue on an ongoing basis to ensure a successful freshman year.

Led by the Graduation Specialist unit in the Office of the Registrar, the Senior Success Initiative works with students in their last year of study at the college. This effort begins with a comprehensive review of the academic record to determine remaining courses and culminates with an academic plan which includes opportunities to leverage prior learning to satisfy missing degree requirements. As the College successfully develops a culture of evidence, the ability to leverage data in real-time ways to move the needle on student success will help ensure continued increases in graduation rates.

Transfer Outcomes: Even though the number of first-time, full-time students has grown in recent years, new full-time transfers still represent the majority of our incoming students. Although the four-year graduation rate of transfer students declined 4.6% points between Fall 2013 (59.1%) and Fall 2014 (54.5%) entering cohorts, Lehman has consistently been a leader in transfer graduation rates, with a rate above the senior college average in each of the previous five years. **As part of the PMP, the College plans to increase the graduation rate of transfer students to 57% for the Fall 2018 entering cohort. This would represent a 2.5 percentage point increase from Fall 2014.** This aligns with the goal we have set for our strategic plan to increase the graduation rate of transfer students to 61% for the Fall 2020 entering cohort, which would represent the highest such rate in at least a decade.

In order to reach this goal, Lehman College has and will continue to develop and deploy a number of strategies. The College plans to further expand its use of Degree Works in an effort to enable our students to better plan their courses and track progression towards degree completion. In recognition of the financial difficulties that many of our students face we are expanding our TAP recovery project, which recovered \$325,000 in applied awards in the initial pilot this fall. Our continuation of the Race to the Finish Line Initiative, which provides students with stipends to offset the costs associated with gaining necessary credentials, will help expand prior learning initiatives.

Career Success: Lehman College remains committed to serving as an engine of upward mobility by providing opportunities for experiential learning and career engagement. As part of our strategic planning efforts, the College has set a goal of increasing the percent of students who participate in internships by five percentage points between 2019 and 2024, from 25% to 30%. As part of the PMP, we expect the percent of students who participate in internships to increase from 25% to 29% between 2019 and 2023.

To meet this goal, we will leverage a number of strategies. In order to promote collaboration between advisors, schools, and students for recruitment initiatives, the College plans to create the role of Employer Relations Manager. It is also important to increase and improve the opportunities we provide our students for employer engagement. We expect to do so through strengthened partnerships with the CUNY Innovative Sector teams; the more widespread use of

digital badges to help communicate the underlying value of a degree; platforms like Simplicity, which allows Lehman students and employers to network; and through the identification of paid micro-internship and virtual internship opportunities. The College will also be developing an organized and collaborative approach to accurately monitor and track internship participation. A new program with Braven that launches Spring Term 2020 will initially recruit 150 students who will have a special career course, mentorship by company managers and connections to those companies.

Faculty, Staff, and ECP Diversity: Lehman College is committed to recruiting, hiring, and retaining a diverse workforce. This commitment is especially important given our highly diverse student population. In addition to having the only majority-Hispanic undergraduate population (54%) among senior colleges, nearly 68% and 81% of our undergraduates are women and underrepresented minorities, respectively. It is important to undertake efforts to have that diversity reflected in the totality of our staff. In light of that, the College has used the PMP and Strategic Plan to set goals in support of this aim across a number of dimensions, which align and comply with the University's Policy on Affirmative and non-discrimination laws. They are listed below.

Gender:

- **We aim as part of the PMP to increase by four percentage points the percentage of full-time employees who are female, from 52% in 2018 to 56% in 2022.** A comparable goal and trajectory has been established for our strategic plan, in which we will increase by five percentage points the percentage of full-time employees who are female, from 53% in 2019 to 58% in 2024.

Race/Ethnicity:

- **Additionally, we have set a PMP goal to increase, from 58% in 2018 to 60% in 2022, the percentage of full-time employees who are minority.** This will complement our strategic plan goal to increase the percent of full-time employees who are minority to 62% in 2024.

Italian American:

- **As part of the PMP we will increase the percentage of full-time employees who are Italian American, from 6% in 2018 to 9% in 2022.** This will help ensure we are on track to attain our strategic plan goal to increase the percentage of full-time employees who are Italian-American to 11% in 2024.

To meet these goals, the College plans to: employ best practices to attract diverse applicants, complete searches efficiently and effectively and provide fair and equitable treatment in the search and selection processes; implement a continuous improvement plan to refine and strengthen the search process; administer a search effectiveness survey annually to assess stakeholder satisfaction and impressions of the search process and use findings to improve processes; communicate with and educate the campus community on strategies to promote diversity and inclusion, and cultivating a positive and authentic campus climate where all members of the community experience a sense of belonging.

There are a number of additional areas that are immediate and long-term priorities for the campus, which are detailed in our [Strategic Growth and Investment Plan](#) and noted below:

- Curricular Renewal and Innovation,
- Enrollment and Student Success,
- Research and Entrepreneurship,
- Building and Developing the Team,
- External Engagement,
- Funding Support and Telling Our Story,
- Strengthening our Data and Technical Infrastructure, and
- Strategic Finance and Organizational Sustainability.

We are grateful for this important opportunity to look ahead, and for your continued support and partnership as we make progress towards our shared goals and priorities on behalf of our students and community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Lemons', followed by a stylized flourish or symbol.

Daniel Lemons
President

Enclosures (2)