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

Dear Chancellor Matos Rodríguez,

I am writing to update you on Lehman College's progress on its PMP goals. Lehman began the 2020-2021 academic year with an enrollment of 15,091, which was a slight change from its enrollment of 15,143 during Fall 2019. Lehman College projects that it will have 3,000 or somewhat more graduates this year. Expanding Lehman's graduating class—and maintaining enrollment numbers during the COVID-19 pandemic—demonstrates the College's commitment to increasing educational attainment in the Bronx. In 2017, Lehman College launched the 90x30 challenge, a bold initiative to increase educational attainment in the Bronx—a borough identified by the Equality of Opportunity Project as “among the worst counties in the U.S. in helping poor children move up the income ladder,”—by awarding 90,000 or more degrees and credentials from the beginning of the initiative through 2030. Lehman College remains on track to meet this ambitious goal.

During AY 2020-2021, the College completed Lehman 2025, its strategic plan for 2020-2025. The College is now developing implementation plans and budgetary allocations to bring this strategic plan to fruition. While the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted our campus presence and operations, the College has maintained momentum in increasing key metrics of CUNY PMP and Lehman strategic goals.

Progress Toward CUNY PMP and Lehman Strategic Goals

It goes without saying, certainly more than once, that many performance indicators listed below from the past year have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. How that may have occurred will be difficult to ascertain, but its tremendous impact on the economic conditions of the Bronx, from which 60% of Lehman students come, has no doubt played a large roll.

Student Success:

Six-Year Graduation Rate: 53.2% of full-time, first-time freshmen who entered Lehman College in fall 2014 graduated within six years. That was a 0.3% increase in the figure over the fall 2013 cohort. That this increase in the six-year graduation rate occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic makes it even more remarkable. Since the fall 2009 cohort, the six-year graduation rate has increased 12.4 percentage points. Lehman has set its eyes on raising the six-year graduation rate to 55% for full-time, first-time freshmen who entered the college in fall 2017.

Four-Year Graduation Rate: Lehman College's four-year graduation rate for full-time, first-time freshmen who entered the college during fall 2016 fell to 26.8%. That was a 1.8 percentage point drop from the prior

year. Overall, the four-year graduation rate has increased by 6.4 percentage points over the past five years. Lehman College will closely monitor developments in the four-year graduation rate and implement specific interventions to reverse this dip.

Transfer Outcomes: The four-year graduation rate for transfer students rose to 57.9% in 2020. Transfer students continue to comprise by far the largest share of Lehman College's incoming students. The rise in the four-year transfer graduation rate during a time when the four-year graduation rate fell for full-time, first-time freshmen is encouraging. Lehman College is slightly ahead of its goal of achieving a 57% four-year transfer graduation rate for transfer students who enter the college in fall 2019.

Retention: The fall-to-fall one-year retention rate for first-time freshmen was 80.6% for the fall 2019 cohort. That was a decline from the 82.5% figure reported from a year earlier. As noted above, it is likely that the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on student decision making, including decisions over whether to return to college or defer return until classes have resumed on a large on-campus scale.

Momentum: Lehman College has generally continued to increase the percentage at which first-year students accumulate 30 or more credits. 56.1% of freshmen who entered Lehman College during fall 2019 completed 30 or more credits. Although that was a decrease from the 62.0% recorded by the fall 2018 cohort, it was a 4.1 percentage point increase from the 52.0% figure for the fall 2015 cohort.

Pedagogical professional development linked to student success outcomes/efforts: In 2019, I allocated \$180,000 in funding to Academic Affairs for a combination of course redesign and curriculum renewal. The Student Success Course Redesign Initiative (SSCRI) selected ten proposals from seven departments, focusing on gateway courses with high drop/withdrawal/incomplete/failure (DWIF) rates. The initial results from the courses that were run during fall 2020 were promising. For example, the MAT 132 DWIF rate fell from 17.9% during fall 2019 to 8.1% during fall 2020; JRN 211 DWIF rate fell from 12.0% to 6.0%; the DWIF rate for BIO 173 fell sharply from 22.5% to 10.0%; and, the CMP 168 DWIF rate fell from 30.0% to 26.0%. There was an increase in the DWIF rate for CMP 167. PHI 171 saw an increase in the DWIF rate, but caution is required as the impact of having moved all the courses online could have outweighed the potential benefits of the course redesign. Additional data will be needed in the coming semesters to verify the impact of the course redesign and to determine whether to scale up select pilot initiatives.

In terms of the curriculum renewal initiative, the Board of Trustees approved the college's proposal for an online doctorate degree in higher education leadership in December 2020, the first such interdisciplinary online program at CUNY. A B.S.-M.S. Exercise Science program is now in place. Additional programs (B.S.-M.S. Dietetics, Foods & Nutrition, B.S.-M.S. Health Education Promotion, B.S.-M.S. Recreation Education, Counselor Education: Clinical Mental Health Counseling, and ECCE plan for specialization in infants & toddlers) were on track to be finalized by CUNY Central by the end of spring 2021.

Gateway Courses: Lehman continues to lead the senior colleges in the percentage of fall FTFT freshmen in baccalaureate programs who passed Gateway Math in the fall and spring semesters (84.6). It also leads in the percentage of fall full-time first-time freshmen in baccalaureate programs who pass Gateway Math in the first year (84.8). This represents a sustained increase of an astounding 44 percent over five years! These data clearly demonstrate the results of innovative changes in the math program. No other CUNY school has come close to this level of improved pass rates in Math.

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 four percentage points between 2020 and 2024, from 25% to 29%. The most recent figure from 2019 was 25%.

The CEDC Internship Program provides students with assistance in researching, identifying, and applying for internship opportunities through on and off campus events, online resources, and referrals. The CEDC Internship Program successfully transitioned services to a virtual platform, even increasing student and employer participation. AY2020-2021 (May 1 2020 to May 31 2021) provided impressive results for student engagement and participation in internships and experiential learning. Such programs included: (1) virtual internships and (2) mentorship/ELO programs inclusive of the CUNY Definition of Internship as Experiential Learning Opportunities in which “independent internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths” Overall student participation in internships increased by 4% in AY2020-2021 (615 vs. 592).

Faculty, Staff, and ECP Diversity

As a Hispanic-serving institution (HSI), the College is committed to recruiting, hiring, and retaining a diverse workforce. During fall 2020, 48.2% of Lehman’s students were Hispanic and 32.1% were Black. Minority students comprised 90.5% of Lehman’s student population. Women accounted for 69.4% of the student body. The College remains committed to recruiting, hiring and retaining a diverse workforce, and its long-term aspiration is a workforce that reflects its student demography.

- **Full Time Faculty:** Lehman College’s efforts to implemented new strategies to build greater diversity in its faculty continues to yield positive results. The percentage of full-time faculty who are minorities increased from 35.5% in Fall 2019 to 38.1% in Fall 2020, a 2.6% increase.
- **Gender:** At Lehman College, 53% of full-time employees were female during AY 2020-21. That figure was unchanged from the prior year. Lehman College is on track to meet its goal of 55% in 2024.
- **Race/Ethnicity:** At Lehman College, 60% of full-time employees were from minority groups during AY 2020-21, 20% of full-time employees were Black/African-American and 31% were Hispanic/LatinX. That figure had increased from 58% in 2019. Lehman College is on track to achieve its goal of 62% in 2024.
- **Italian-American:** At Lehman College, 5% of full-time employees were Italian-American during AY 2020-21. That figure was down from 6% in 2018. Lehman has set goals of increasing that figure to 6% in 2024.

Diversity of First-Time Freshmen

During fall 2020, 36.5% of first-time freshmen were males, as opposed to 37.8% in fall 2019. 94.6% of first-time freshmen came from underrepresented minority groups, which represented a slight increase from 93.9% in fall 2019. The College aims to increase the share of first-time freshmen who are male to 40.0% by fall 2024 while maintaining its high share of freshmen who come from underrepresented minority groups.

Sustainability:

During the period ending September 30, 2020, Lehman College recycled 202.72 tons of mixed paper; mixed glass, plastic, and metal containers; and, metals. Lehman College composted 64.82 tons of waste and reused 12.8 tons of obsolete electronics. Waste that was recycled, composted, or reused

amounted to 37.5% of total waste and 48.4% of waste excluding uncompacted construction debris.

COVID-19 Response

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in March led Lehman to convert five partially-online classes, 815 web-enhanced classes, and 1,367 in-person classes to fully distance learning. During AY 2020-2021, all of the more than 5,000 courses at Lehman were either fully online (94.6%) or hybrid (5.4%).

Term	Fully Online	Hybrid	Total
Fall 2020	2,475	167	2,642
Spring 2021	2,328	109	2,437
AY 2020-2021	4,803 (94.6%)	276 (5.4%)	5,079 (100.0%)

Following Lehman College's implementation of its academic continuity plan on March 23, 2020, the College moved its academic programs and support services online. Lehman College's instructors initiated and maintained substantive and regular voice and electronic communication with students. Most course instructors continued to deliver their instruction and course content over the University's LMS, Blackboard, which includes components such as Collaborate and VoiceThread, a presentation and engaging tool. All instructors make use of one or more CUNY-approved collaborative platforms, including Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, a built-in video conferencing tool, Microsoft Office 365/Teams, CUNY Webex, Zoom, and Dropbox/OneDrive in delivering the student learning experience.

To support faculty transition to distance teaching and learning modality as a result of COVID-19, the Information Technology Division launched the online Digital Toolkit, and the Office of Online Education prepared recommendations, instructional guides, and FAQs for Faculty Going Online in a Hurry. In addition, the college provided numerous online trainings and workshops, Live FAQ sessions, "How-to" Webinar, Blackboard/Teams Office Hours, and help desk assistance to name a few. A number of CUNY and Lehman-supported video- and audio-conferencing options were also made available to faculty and staff to support the need for live meetings. The College also appointed Faculty Technology Mentors to provide technical assistance on online delivery to faculty across all five schools.

From July 1-December 31, 2020, for which statistics are available, 412 faculty were served through mentors, 259 faculty received email support or extended consultations, 233 faculty attended the Essentials for Online Teaching workshop, and 31 faculty attended the Preparation for Teaching Online workshop.

During AY 2020-2021, Lehman College has loaned more than 2,000 devices to students. The majority of student loaner devices have been Chromebooks, PC laptops, mi-fi devices, and iPads. The college has also provided about 700 loaner devices to faculty and staff members to assist with their remote work.

The Lehman community was kept up-to-date on developments by regular communication from me, Provost Nwosu and others. Between July 1, 2020 and May 20, 2021, I disseminated [18 messages](#), [held 19 live briefings](#), and [hosted five Instagram briefings](#) that addressed COVID-19 and COVID-related developments. Attendance for the live briefings has regularly ranged from 150-300 participants for each session. Provost Nwosu also disseminated [messages](#) to academic continuity and student support. Lehman College was guided by its [Guidelines for Preparation for Summer 2020 and AY2020-2021](#)

Prior to the pandemic shutdown, the food pantry operated on campus in a supermarket style mode of service. Students were able to visit the pantry and select the items that they need, including fresh produce, frozen goods, and canned/pre-packaged groceries. A grocery bag would provide 9 meals for 3 days for one person. A \$25 gift-card is equivalent to a grocery. Right after the campus closure, our services were changed to appointment-based pickups. Groceries were pre-packed in bags, and students could not customize their contents. Although the need was high, students were scared to come to campus and expose themselves to the virus. Our survey shows that 89% of pantry users live with either elderly relatives and/or children. Several of those who made an appointment never showed up for their grocery bag.

In late March 2020, staff from the Division of Enrollment Management donated \$2,650 in gift cards for student distribution. This inspired us to start a virtual pantry. We purchased gift-codes from Target and emailed these to students so that they can purchase groceries online. With this we were able to minimize risk of our students commuting to the Bronx, which was a hotspot for COVID19 infection while providing them with the services they needed.

This virtual service has remained the primary way our Lehman Food Bank helps students. We also did 8 in-person bulk grocery bags distributions and worked with a local restaurant, *Mott Haven Bar and Grill*, during the summer 2020, to provide hot meals for Lehman students. Since the campus closure in March, we have provided an equivalent to 6,405 grocery bags, or 57,645 meals. We also launched the virtual Basic Needs Center that enabled students to access resources such as micro-grants and counseling services. The Campaign for Lehman raised more than \$1.3 million to provide relief to its students during the pandemic.

Starting in April 2021, Lehman College partnered with The City of New York to launch the Bronx's newest COVID-19 vaccination hub, located in the College's APEX Athletic Center at 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West in the borough's Kingsbridge Heights neighborhood. Up to 300 people a day can now receive a Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine at the hub, operated by SOMOS Community Care, a network of community physicians in the Bronx, Queens, Manhattan, and Brooklyn. The site is open to New Yorkers age 16 or older and non-New York City residents age 16 or older who work or study in the city. No appointments are necessary.

Major Initiatives in Progress

Strategic Plan: Work on our new [strategic plan](#) was completed early in the spring 2021 semester following a February 18 town hall discussion that drew more than 100 participants. This strategic plan will guide the college over the next five years. Lehman College is currently in the midst of developing action plans and resource allocations to enable it to pursue its strategic plan. A total of \$2 million in tax levy will be invested in new strategic initiatives from this plan, along with designated funding from the \$30 million Mackenzie Scott gift received December 2020.

Continuous Improvement: During the past academic year, Lehman College continued to strengthen its continuous improvement infrastructure and processes. It has implemented a formal institutional effectiveness plan that more closely aligns planning and assessment. Assessment has now been incorporated into the formal governance process via regular reporting to Lehman College Senate, periodic presentations at the Provost's and Deans' Council (PDC), and the Provost's Annual Assessment Report to the College that includes General Education assessment. Lehman College has also been working to deepen its overall culture of improvement by strengthening and expanding understanding of assessment through periodic professional development workshops and activities, including participation in regional and national convenings.

During AY 2020-21, the Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness (OAAE) held 7 workshops and 3

brown bag lunches on assessment topics including “Developing an Effective Assessment Plan,” “Writing Assessment Goals and Measurable Outcomes,” and “Introduction to the AAC&U Value Rubrics.” More than 200 faculty and staff have attended the workshops. The OAEE also made a presentation on the use of assessment to drive improvement to the Provost’s Team. The Academic Assessment Council, an ad-hoc Senate Committee, held 8 meetings and made 7 reports to the Lehman College Senate to inform the campus community of its ongoing efforts and initiatives.

Lehman College is working through the CUNY procurement process to put in place Watermark’s *Planning & Self-Study* Assessment Management System (AMS). This system will enable Lehman College to better integrate and align its planning and assessment activities.

Academic Planning and Student Success--Course Redesign and Pedagogy Initiatives: During Summer 2019, the provost commissioned a comprehensive analysis of lower division General Education (GE) courses to identify bottlenecks that impact students’ progression, retention, and completion. Subsequently, a series of campus-wide conversations focused on continuing improvements in GE outcomes, after which I allocated \$100,000 for innovative and promising pedagogies that advance student learning. The college launched the *Student Success Course Redesign Initiative (SSCRI): High DWIF/High Enrollment General Education Courses* and redesigned courses were launched in Fall 2020. Ten course proposals were approved for redesign from four schools.

In addition, thirteen curriculum development proposals were approved for funding under the Provost’s Curriculum Development Initiative supported by \$80,000 in funding from the College. The selected proposals offer different instructional modalities, demonstrate potential student impact, anticipated return on investment, impact on Lehman’s 90x30 strategic initiative, and linkage to the overall goals and mission of the College. When fully implemented, they will expand Lehman’s in-person and online footprints as part of its Strategic Growth and Investment Plan (SGIP).

Campus Climate, Diversity, and Inclusion Taskforce: The Campus Climate Taskforce concluded its work aimed at further incorporating diversity and inclusion into the fabric of Lehman College. Its recommendations included the expansion of comprehensive curricula revisions and updates to de-center European texts and writing and add appropriate inclusion of Black, Latino and other diverse perspectives that are more reflective of the interests and identities of the student body; more robust diversity and inclusion training; better dissemination of diversity, hiring and retention resources based on the work and information the Human Resources department already has available; regular syllabi revisions and workshops to keep all departments up to date with regards to how diversity and inclusion are centered or reflected in their classes, and; the development of more a nuanced incident reporting system that helps track more than the very rare violent outburst or hate crime as an indication of how race, ethnicity or LGBTQ+ identity is received or treated on campus. We are finalizing a contract with Rankin and Associates to carry out a year-long campus climate study that will begin fall 2021.

Lehman Extension (LEx), launched in spring 2021, is designed to address the needs of the region for flexible educational pathways, bringing new and existing programs in many disciplines to students whose needs are not met by current programs, scheduling or delivery mode. LEx degrees and credentials will be fully attainable through evening and weekend courses and hybrid/online offerings. LEx will advance the 90X30 initiative and expand our impact on the Bronx. Launch of a pilot is planned for Spring 2021.

ATLAS (Anchored in the Liberal Arts), a structured program using transformative texts to reform General Education for transfer students enrolled in the traditional liberal arts and professional programs at

Lehman. Launched in January 2021 with nearly 100 faculty participating in the initiative, ATLAS is funded with a planning grant from the Teagle Foundation.

AASCU's Center Student Success (CSS) is a new Gates Foundation-funded initiative in which Lehman is one of five colleges in the national pilot group. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Lehman continued to participate in this initiative, focusing our efforts on improving seamless transfer of students from community colleges to Lehman. As part of this work, a Student Success Summit has been scheduled for October 15 with technical support from AASCU.

A Bronx Environmental Summit was hosted by Lehman College, officially marking the Launch of the Urban Climate Justice Studies Initiative at the College. The summit included an impressive cast of scholars and experts from around the country. There were over 300 participants. This broad interdisciplinary initiative, led by Dean Pam Mills of our School of Natural and Social Sciences, includes faculty from environmental science, botany, political science, philosophy, and media studies among other departments. We are partnering with the New York Botanical Garden and other environmental organizations. The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation provided seed funding for this initiative.

The Bronx Recovery Corps (BRC) an experiential learning/internship program, designed to provide students with the opportunity to contribute to the economic recovery of The Bronx and NYC, was launched at Lehman College, with support from CUNY, Deutsche Bank Foundation, and Here to Here. The inaugural class included 41 students called BRC Fellows. The program underscores Lehman's commitment to applied or experiential learning as a signature component of a Lehman education.

Mackenzie Scott Gift: Lehman College received a \$30 million gift from Ms. Mackenzie Scott. Lehman College has invested \$26 million of the gift in endowment while the balance will go into addressing immediate basic student needs, scholarships, and other activities that support students; faculty capacity building, pedagogy and curricular innovation, and other activities that enhance what we do; cross-disciplinary campus initiatives; and, institutional capacity building to attract additional outside finding. A share of the funds will also be used to implement the recommendations of the Campus Climate Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion.

Financial Position. At the start of the fall 2020 semester, Lehman College had a fund balance of approximately \$13.5 million, which has afforded some flexibility in addressing the rapidly-developing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. In part, on account of this fund balance, Lehman College was able to offer its students all of the courses they needed to progress and avoid layoffs. It was able to reappoint a large percentage of its adjunct faculty, which enabled these faculty to retain their health insurance coverage during the pandemic.

This balance resulted from a combination of fiscal prudence, deferred hiring, and strong enrollment growth. I have frequently updated the college's stakeholders about the budget, educating them and building understanding. We have maintained a constructively-engaged environment in which the administrators, department chairs, faculty and staff, have offered their best efforts to strategically trim their budgets in the face of the uncertainty through most of the year about our New York State and CUNY budget environment. As Lehman College emerges from the pandemic, I remain confident in its future. As part of our strategic planning process and beyond strategic planning, we have identified significant ways to build our programs and strengthen our revenues.

I conclude my last PMP letter as interim President of Lehman College with pride in how we, as a community of students, faculty, staff, and administrators, pulled together during a period of extraordinary

challenge. Those efforts, the lessons learned, and the strategic course to which the College has committed itself have created a strong foundation on which it will be able to sustain and deepen its transformational work in the Bronx. Lehman College has accomplished great things in advancing its mission. The future is bright and even greater things lie ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Lemons', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Daniel Lemons
Interim President