



August 20, 2025

The Honorable Tim Walberg
Chairman
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Education and Workforce
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6100

Attn: Anders Vendt, Committee Staff (anders.vendt@mail.house.gov)

Re: Responses to Questions for the Record

Dear Chairman Walberg:

First, thank you again for the opportunity to testify before the House Committee on Education and Workforce (the “Committee”) on July 15, 2025. Further, we appreciate the follow-up questions from Members of the Committee that were shared in your letter dated July 30, 2025. To that end, please find attached written responses to the Members’ questions.

Thank you again for the opportunity afforded to The City University of New York to contribute to the work of the Committee on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Félix V. Matos Rodríguez
Chancellor

Responses to Questions for the Record

QUESTION #1. In September 2024, masked SJP protestors surrounded and taunted Jewish Baruch College freshmen who were attending an event at a local kosher restaurant organized by Hillel. Protesters used antisemitic tropes, threatened violence, and taunted the students about the murder of six hostages, including Hersch Goldberg-Polin, a 23-year old American-Israeli who was executed by Hamas. Several of CUNY's student groups have engaged in campaigns to ban Hillel from campus, effectively trying to dismantle the sole center for Jewish student life on campus. At one particularly shocking demonstration at Baruch in June 2024 held by Students for Justice in Palestine and the Muslim Student Association entitled "Rally Against Hillel," students held signs saying "Hillel Go To Hell," with an upside down red triangle, the symbol that Hamas uses in its propaganda videos to identify Israelis to kill. Just two months later, protestors displayed the same sign with the Hamas terrorist symbol.

Sub Question 1(a). Did Baruch College condemn the use of this terror symbol in protests targeting its students?

ANSWER. The City University of New York (the "University" or "CUNY") unequivocally condemned the behavior of protestors who harassed CUNY students at a Hillel-sponsored dinner in September 2024. Baruch College's President issued a statement on September 5, 2024, immediately following the incident, making clear that the incident would be investigated and the behavior of the protestors was unacceptable within the Baruch College Community. Following a thorough investigation and in adherence to due process under University policy, the President of Baruch College decided to pursue disciplinary action. Although we cannot share specific details of disciplinary actions, we have been clear that we are committed to taking decisive action when conduct violates our community's principles.

Sub Question 1(b). What have Baruch and other CUNY schools done to prevent the use of terrorist symbols, like the Hamas upside-down red triangle, on and around their campuses?

ANSWER. CUNY leadership has made clear that hate has no place on any of its campuses. Allegations regarding the use of antisemitic symbols are investigated, reported to the New York Police Department as needed, and disciplined in accordance with CUNY policy, as well as local,

state and federal law, when appropriate. CUNY has also hosted training and presentations on antisemitism and other forms of hate across its campuses.

Sub Question 1(c). How has your administration responded to the horrendous campaign of lies propagated by CUNY SJP chapters and other student groups and their campaign to threaten Jews trying to gather peacefully in community on campus?

ANSWER. CUNY is committed to investigating allegations of antisemitism against student organizations on its campuses. CUNY is also committed to maintaining a safe environment for all students. CUNY has many certified student groups across its campuses that are required to follow CUNY policy in order to remain certified. Violations of CUNY policies have resulted in clubs losing their certification, including groups that have been removed from campus for conduct associated with antisemitic activity in recent years.

QUESTION #2. CUNY operates over two dozen campuses across New York. Does the system maintain a centralized Clery compliance policy, or are individual campuses responsible for interpreting and reporting crimes independently?

ANSWER. CUNY's 26 campuses are individually responsible for providing Annual Campus Security Reports to comply with the Clery Act. In an effort to ensure systemwide compliance, the CUNY Department of Public Safety employs a central Clery Compliance Coordinator to oversee and review the collected data.

QUESTION #3. Do all CUNY campuses report their Clery Daily Crime Logs and Annual Security Reports in a standardized, uniform format and manner? If not, how does the public, or regulators, ensure consistency and accountability system-wide?

ANSWER. Each CUNY campus issues a standardized Annual Security Report, which is published on or before October 1st and is distributed to all students and employees. Crime logs on each of CUNY's separate campuses are managed by a campus Clery Compliance Officer and are

required to include the date the crime was reported, the date and time of the crime, the nature of the crime, the general location of the crime, and the disposition.

QUESTION #4. Does CUNY maintain a separate bias reporting or incident tracking system that is distinct from its Clery Act crime reporting process?

ANSWER. In addition to our Clery Act reporting, CUNY recently established the Center for Inclusivity and Equal Opportunity to ensure that the University's anti-discrimination policies comply with all laws and that best practices are enforced across campuses. As part of this effort, CUNY has procured a best-in-class case management reporting system for discrimination complaints. Through this system, students will be automatically notified of the status of their complaints throughout the process, and staff will be able to use the system to effectively manage the complaints across the lifecycle of an investigation.

QUESTION #5. If an antisemitic incident is reported through CUNY's internal bias reporting channels, who is responsible for determining whether that incident qualifies as a Clery-reportable hate crime?

ANSWER. The New York City Police Department or the New York State Police Department Hate Crimes Task Force determines whether a reported incident on campus is in fact a hate crime.

QUESTION #6. Under New York State Education Law § 6436, all New York colleges are required to report bias-related crimes and include that information in their annual reports. Does CUNY handle this state-level reporting separately from its Clery Act obligations?

ANSWER. The New York State Campus Hate Crimes Reporting law amended Article 129-A of the New York State Education Law ("Article 129-A"), thereby strengthening the investigation and reporting requirements for hate crime incidents occurring on college campuses and supplementing CUNY's obligations under the Clery Act. Consistent with these amendments to the

New York State law, on October 1st of each year, each CUNY school or college reports and posts separate, clearly designated data on hate crime offenses occurring on campus.

QUESTION #7. Has CUNY conducted a post-October 7, 2023 review or audit of bias incidents across its campuses to verify that qualifying incidents were properly logged and reported under Clery?

ANSWER. Since October 7, 2023, the University has strengthened its reporting under the Clery Act by taking steps to comply with the amendments to Article 129-A, which went into effect on October 9, 2023. This New York State law augments the Clery Act by requiring New York colleges, such as CUNY, to report hate crimes statistics as a separate, designated category of crime; adopt and implement a plan for the investigation of hate crimes on campus; apply the New York penal law definition of hate crime; and provide bias related and hate crime prevention education to students. Accordingly, as part of its implementation of these amendments, CUNY will work to investigate hate crimes and is actively working to improve its system for hate crime reporting and complaint management.

QUESTION #8. Chancellor Rodriguez, under your leadership, CUNY introduced the “University-Wide Discrimination and Retaliation Reporting Portal,” a public platform to report alleged discrimination on campus. Your platform relies on a definition of antisemitism developed in the widely criticized, CAIR-endorsed Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA) over the generally accepted definition from the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). Please explain why your administration chose a definition of “antisemitism,” that centers around “all forms of racism” rather than adhering to the traditionally accepted IHRA definition?

ANSWER. CUNY relies on the IHRA definition as a vital resource in identifying and ultimately combatting antisemitism on its campuses. The definition has been incorporated into our new hire training for all individuals tasked with investigating civil rights complaints on campus and is included as a component in our refresher courses for all existing CUNY personnel, regardless of their role. Complaints of antisemitism on campus are investigated in accordance with CUNY policy, as well as local, state and federal law. We do not rely on the JDA definition.

QUESTION #9. Chancellor Rodriguez, you previously testified that CUNY’s complaint portal was an effective step forward. Yet an independent report called it a black box that creates confusion and discourages reporting. How do you explain the two-year delay in fixing a broken system meant to protect vulnerable students? Why wasn’t it fixed until the day you testified in front of New York City Council?

ANSWER. In 2022, CUNY launched its first ever centralized online portal for anyone in the CUNY community to report complaints of discrimination or harassment, providing students, faculty and others with a means to report a complaint more easily and for CUNY to better manage and track complaints systemwide. While the portal was an important step in improving CUNY’s complaint and investigation process, the University issued a Request for Proposals to procure a “best-in-class” case management system that would provide better functionality for both anyone making an online complaint and for CUNY staff responsible for investigating such complaints. This fall the University will launch the new online portal system for discrimination and harassment complaints, which provides automatic case updates for students and a case management system for investigators.

QUESTION #10. Chancellor Rodriguez, you also previously claimed that \$550,000 of Anti-Hate Initiative funding provided by the NY City Council, specifically earmarked for combating antisemitism after Oct 7 was used by your administration to fight antisemitism. Please explain why you decided to instead use this funding to host the antisemitic 'Race and the Question of Palestine' program, featuring speakers with long histories of inflammatory rhetoric about Jews and Israel? Do you believe this program should be funded by City Council Anti-Hate Initiative funding and NYS taxpayer dollars?

ANSWER. Since October 7, 2023, the University’s Anti-Hate Initiative, funded by the New York City Council, has funded numerous programs to combat religious, racial and ethnic discrimination, including antisemitism. Programs have included religious pluralism training with an emphasis on combatting antisemitism; a workshop hosted by the Jewish Education Project providing a comprehensive overview of Jewish identity, people, history and religion; a workshop promoting understanding of New York City’s diverse Jewish communities; and many other

programs designed to counter antisemitism. CUNY will continue to combat antisemitism and other forms of bigotry through campus-wide training and programming.