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President Jennifer J. Raab
Hunter College, CUNY

Dear President Raab,

As you know, Hunter College has always been a leader in support of new scholarship and a space where women and underrepresented minority groups could develop to their highest potential and contribute to the city and nation in all fields. Hunter is distinguished for its female Nobel Prize recipients, for example, at a time when few women were in STEM disciplines. Since the early 1970s, it has been a leader in Women's Studies (now the Women's and Gender Studies Program). I am proud to be a member of Hunter's Women's and Gender Studies Collective that has produced four editions of *Women's Realities, Women's Choices: An Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies* (OUP, 1983, 1995, 2005, 2015) and given the College national and international standing. Hunter has also been an intellectual leader in Ethnic Studies, especially Black & Puerto Rican Studies and Asian American Studies (AAS). I was previously on the faculty (1986-1992), and am also proud to have played a part in Asian American Studies' early development, and worked with past Presidents Donna Shalala and Paul Leclerc, both of whom provided financial and other institutional supports for AAS.

I write to express my deep concerns and huge disappointment for Hunter's lack of both consideration and commitment for the important intellectual work that Asian American Studies offers to research, scholarship, teaching, and academic programming for *all* students and the academy generally. Since the mid-1970s, AAS at Hunter has been a leader in the field on the East Coast, despite its limited and diminishing support from the College. Yet, in recent years, AAS has continued to develop its curricular and co-curricular offerings, serve large numbers of students, obtained an NEH grant, and most recently secured a \$1.7m Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI) award from the U.S. Dept. of Education. The AANAPISI award is highly competitive and one of a small number of Minority Serving Institution (MSI) grants. I have studied and written about AANAPISIs and they raise the campus national profile with their notable activities and recognition. The award is further evidence of the quality and commitment of the leadership and faculty of the AAS program. Such activities clearly suggest that the Hunter program deserves Department status.

Asian American Studies at Hunter College appears to be at a crossroads. With Professor Peter Kwong's untimely death and Jennifer Hayashida's non-reappointment, and ongoing efforts to reallocate resources for AAS without full-time faculty input and appropriate due process, there is too much uncertainty about the future of the program. Any weakening in faculty appointments raises issues about meeting AAS course offerings, places more responsibility on existing faculty, and calls to question how students can be well served. Further causes for alarm are who will direct the 1.7 million AANAPISI federal grant, how will it be implemented, and what will be the impact on future awards and fundraising?

I have just returned from the annual meeting of the Association for Asian American Studies (AAAS) in Portland, Oregon. With nearly 900 scholars attending from AAS departments and programs from across the United States, as well as Canada and Asia, Hunter's situation was duly and openly discussed. It should be noted that Hunter College held the first East Coast conference of AAAS in 1989, which launched the Association as a national organization. That Hunter should lose its standing in AAS is of great concern to many scholars and academic leaders, as well as students, locally and nation-wide.

To reduce the uncertainty of AAS at Hunter, I hope that you will clarify to the faculty, students, and the Asian American scholarly and general community, in New York City and nationally, what your intentions are in regard to the future of this important program. Other interdisciplinary programs, including Ethnic Studies and Women's and Gender Studies, and other disciplines on campus are also impacted.

In the scope of Hunter's budget, AAS represents a small financial output, yet it is bringing in new funding resources and national and international attention to the significant intellectual and professional work of the College. AAS and its faculty are valuable educational resources that bring Hunter prestige that is recognized elsewhere. CUNY also needs to acknowledge Hunter's role in the field of Asian American Studies not only in the United States, but elsewhere. AAS is carried out by scholars in universities in Asian countries as well where their populations overseas, especially in the U.S., are also subjects of research and interactions. All this is long overdue.

Sincerely yours,

Shirley Hune

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(Formerly Associate Professor and Professor of Social Foundations of Education, Hunter College, 1986-1992 and Associate Provost, 1990-92)