



Eugenio María de Hostos Community College
of the City University of New York

475 Grand Concourse, Bronx, New York 10451 (212) 993-8000

March 30, 1976

Governor Hugh Carey
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Carey:

You must prevent Hostos Community College from being closed. There can be no justification for depriving minority people of one of their most important and hard-earned gains.

This country was founded on the concept of equality of opportunity. Our history has been a struggle to approach this ideal. This is what we teach in the Social Sciences Department. Closing Hostos would constitute a severe setback. If you would permit this to happen you would inalterably blemish your fine record as a defender of minority rights.

It seems incredible that the two units of CUNY, now apparently the most affected by the cutbacks, Hostos and Medgar Evers, are the very schools which were created for minority students and located in their neighborhoods, meeting a long overdue need. The Hispanic and Black people of New York are the poorest and most exploited of all ethnic groups in the city. With the budget cuts they have been the hardest hit in terms of job losses and increased neglect. Closing their college is the final racist insult. They won't stand for it. We won't stand for it. You shouldn't stand for it.

Nobody likes welfare. Nobody really benefits from welfare. To reverse this financial drain people must be trained for jobs which the community needs. Hostos provides such training. To close Hostos would not save money. Money spent for education in the South Bronx is a very productive expenditure.

In fact, Hostos represents a mere one percent of CUNY's budget. With all the long-term lease commitments on its buildings, closing Hostos would actually save only two million dollars. Of course, the cost per student would go down once Hostos reached its projected sized of 5000 students.

The money is very well spent. Remediation costs money and by doing it well we make open admissions work. The English as a Second Language (ESL) program costs money and together with the many courses offered in Spanish we open the college doors to the large Hispanic population. The health sciences programs cost money for equipment and labs and the community benefits.

We have worked hard for five years to make Hostos a decent academic institution. We passed accreditation with high marks and have improved since. Teaching at a school like Hostos is not like teaching at Harvard or CCNY. Nevertheless we have developed teaching strategies that work. To close Hostos would be to wash this effort down the drain.

Please understand. Hostos is a serious college. The subject matter, reading and examinations in the Social Sciences Department, for example, are at a university level. We require research papers, term papers and essay examinations. We have built a decent library to back us up.

The cultural and racial makeup of the student body and faculty enables us to go beyond the traditional. We have academically excellent Puerto Rican and African Studies Departments. Within the classroom and through extra-curricular educational and cultural activities we stress Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Latin America, Black Americans and Africa. Outstanding examples are Puerto Rican Week, and African Liberation Week.

Merger with Bronx Community College, as has been proposed, is not an acceptable alternative. A community college must serve its community. Hostos Community College is located in the South Bronx and just across the river from Harlem and serves these communities. Bronx Community College never has and never will. A large percentage of our students register by coming in off the street. Many are working adults whose return to college is made possible only through community accessibility.

The South Bronx has a chance to thrive. Hostos can be part of the rebuilding opportunity; closing the college can be a mortal blow. The existence of a college upgrades the neighborhood and brings business to local merchants. Hostos offers the community concerts, lectures, art fairs and dances. It provides a free dental hygiene clinic, health fairs, and a free income tax service.

Hostos Community College and the new Lincoln Hospital were planned to complement each other through their close proximity, with our students doing their clinical at Lincoln. The proposal to create a Hostos Health Science Institute at Bronx Community College would destroy this relationship. Lincoln Hospital would suffer. Our students would suffer, especially the Spanish speaking health sciences students.

Our interesting cost saving proposal is to use the part of the new Lincoln Hospital which is not scheduled to be used. By scheduling classes, laboratories and clinics there for our health sciences students, Hostos could save rental money.

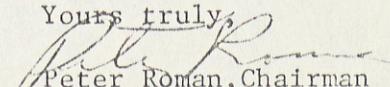
The proposal to create a bi-lingual institute at Bronx Community College is equally inadequate and provides no substitute for a bi-lingual college. The goal is not to isolate in an institutional "ghetto" the Spanish speaking students, but rather to have courses taught in Spanish and English in all departments. Thus, only at Hostos, many of our Hispanic residents can take college courses while mastering English.

In the New York City budget crisis higher education and minority groups have been hit disproportionately hard. It is time to draw the line, and the decision lies with you. We have appealed to the BHE, to the Mayor, to the legislators and have met with indecision and passing the buck.

In the name of common decency, you must keep Hostos open. In the name of hope for the future for Hispanic and Black individuals and their communities, you must keep Hostos open. In the name of what the Bi-Centennial should stand for, you must keep Hostos open.

The time is short and we trust you will act soon. We urgently request a face-to-face meeting with you to further expound on the above points and to answer your questions.

Yours truly,


Peter Roman, Chairman
Social Science Dept.