

Response to BGA:

General statement

- **City Colleges dramatically reformed its policies and procedures over the last several years to align with national best practice as well as employer and 4-year university requirements, and to ensure that students received the degrees they had earned, enabling them to move on in their careers and, for many, make the leap from living in poverty to earning a living wage.**
- **Going forward, City Colleges will continue to use best practices to inform its work and ensure all students are prepared to reach their college and career goals.**

Please contact the following experts to verify the best practice nature of this work:

- Davis Jenkins, Community College Research Center, Columbia University, phone: (312) 953-5286

Retroactive degrees

- The awarding of retroactive degrees is just one of many strategies rooted in national best practice that were employed to dramatically reform City Colleges to better support students in reaching their goals.
- **Even excluding every one of these degrees, the graduation rate still more than doubled from 7 to 17 percent since the launch of Reinvention.** (The federally-defined IPEDS graduate rate counts first-time, full-time students who complete within 150% time of their program.)
- **Even excluding every one of these degrees, City Colleges still more than doubled the number of degrees awarded annually since the launch of Reinvention (from 1,951 in FY09 to 4,553 in FY16).**
- Despite the downward trend in retroactive degrees, **City Colleges graduation rate continues to rise to an expected 18%** in FY17 because of the multi-faced reforms put in place over the last several years that have earned national recognition.
- See references below about the national "Credit When Credit Is Due" movement.

AGS

- The AGS degree offers the greatest flexibility of any degree.
 - When some of our biggest public four-year transfer partner colleges look at students' transcripts to determine how much transfer credit to provide, they often look at classes, not degree type. An AGS degree allows students to strategically select their courses based on their pathway and transfer destination.
- As City Colleges has developed clear pathways verified by university transfer partners, it can more confidently guide students into other degree types knowing that destination schools will accept those transfer credits.
- The degree types awarded over the last several years reflect this strategy, with the AGS first increasing and then declining. See "retroactive degree by degree type" chart below.

Degree Awarded	FY2009		FY2010		FY2011		FY2012		FY2013		FY2014		FY2015		FY2016	
AA	70	28%	102	41%	64	25%	46	29%	41	25%	95	13%	271	33%	142	31%
AAS	133	53%	108	44%	126	48%	49	31%	24	14%	39	5%	101	12%	62	13%
AES	2	1%	3	1%	1	0%	2	1%	2	1%	2	0%	2	0%	2	0%
AFA	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	2	0%	1	0%	0	0%
AGS	35	14%	30	12%	55	21%	52	33%	92	55%	565	79%	387	47%	198	43%
AS	10	4%	4	2%	15	6%	7	4%	7	4%	15	2%	55	7%	58	13%
Total Retroactive Degrees	250		247		261		157		166		718		817		462	

Multiple degrees

- **Only the highest credential a student receives is counted toward the IPEDS graduation rate. Point being, a student is only counted once in the graduation rate. For students earning multiple credentials, only the highest credential, as defined by IPEDS, is counted.**
- **Even if one were to remove the second or third degrees, City Colleges still more than doubled the number of degrees awarded annually since the launch of Reinvention.**
- CCC supports students earning a credential when they are able, making them more immediately employable, especially if they are working towards a credential that can take additional years to earn and which they might not ultimately complete. Rather than leaving CCC with no degree, students have an associate degree under their belt that they rightfully earned and which they can leverage when seeking work and earn substantially more than they would were they only to have a high school diploma on their resume.
- Earning multiple degrees is rare. 2.14% of all students (448 of 20,792) receiving a degree from FY10-FY15 received 2 degrees;.03% (7) received 3 degrees.

“Boosting numbers”

- City Colleges students are people with goals – not numbers. These are students who need to support themselves and often their families, and for whom earning a degree can mean the difference between living in poverty and earning a living wage. City Colleges reforms were aimed at ensuring these students received what was their due – the degrees they had earned – so they could move ahead in life and contribute to their communities.

Auto-conferral

- City Colleges does not auto-confer degrees. Every degree is verified before awarding to ensure the student met all program requirements and student intent is confirmed. Since at least Fall 2007, certificates have been “auto-conferred” in a process where City Colleges verifies that a student has met all program requirements, but does not require student confirmation.

Possible discrepancies

- Until Spring 2015, City Colleges relied on a manual process for degree review, so over the course of its over 100 year history there may be some instances subject to human error. Among the numerous reforms put in place over the last several years City Colleges launched a new student

data management system that allows City Colleges to conduct degree audits, such that students and advisors know in real-time whether a student has met the requirements for a degree.

Curriculum/requirement rigor

- **The CCC curriculum has, in fact, become significantly more rigorous, not less.**
- The CCC curriculum reflects employer and 4-year university input to ensure our students are prepared to succeed in the workplace and upon transfer. As just one example, in IT, we have gone from teaching Fortran and word processing to networking, web development, computer science and cyber security.
- **When policy changes were made, it was to bring CCC policies into alignment with state-wide policy, regional accrediting policy, and/or best practice.** Below are responses to your questions regarding policy changes:
 - 1) **In 2010, by Board resolution 30543, the number of general education credit hours needed to earn an AGS degree was changed from 30 to 20.**
 - This board item goes from not stating the number of general education hours to specifying the credit hours needed to earn an AGS degree:
 1. **Old:** "this program requires successful completion of a total of 60 semester hours of general education and elective courses with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0..."
 2. **New:** "this program requires successful completion of a total of 60 semester hours (20 general education and 40 elective courses) with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0..."
 - Cannot find mention of a 30 general education hour requirement for the AGS.
 - 2) **In 2010, by Board resolution 30543, language in the student policy manual stipulating that only general education courses may be applied to a second degree is removed from the manual and a sentence is added to say "an additional 15 course hours may be applied to the second degree."**
 - This change allows students to not need to repeat courses they have already taken for a prior degree. They are still required to meet all requirements of the new degree in order to receive it, with a minimum of 15 additional hours required.
 - 3) **In 2011, by Board resolution 30838, a requirement that general education course requirements be distributed among five categories (Communications, Mathematics, Humanities and Fine Arts, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Physical and Life Sciences) was changed to four categories (Communications, Fine Arts & Humanities, Mathematics & Science, and Social & Behavioral Sciences). The merging mathematics and sciences appears to relaxing general education requirements by allowing students to avoid difficult mathematics by taking science in order to fulfill the requirements.**

- This change was to align with ICCB requirements, per administrative rule 1501.302.3.B:
Each associate degree curriculum shall include a specific general education component consisting of coursework in communication, arts and humanities, social and behavioral sciences, and mathematics and science within the following parameters...
Because of the "and" before mathematics and the lack of a comma between mathematics and science, ICCB indicates four categories, with math and science combined
- The policy manual sets the minimum standards for degree requirements and was changed to match the requirements set in the Administrative Rules of the ICCB (1501.301).

4) In 2013, by Board resolution 31867, the number of residency credits required to obtain a CCC degree is reduced from 21 to 15, making it easier for transfer students to obtain degrees with fewer credits at CCC.

- The change in this policy from 21 to 15 credits followed guidance from the Higher Learning Commission, the regional accrediting body.
- CCC updated this policy again in November 2016, once again following Higher Learning Commission guidance, to say that all students must complete a minimum of twenty-five percent (25%) of the credit hours required for a degree in residency (credit hours earned in CCC classes).

5) In 2013, by Board resolution 31867, the 2010 language stating that “an additional 15 course hours may be applied toward the second degree” is replaced with “the student must enroll in and successfully complete a minimum of 15 additional credit hours ...” Any restriction on the type of credit hours that may be applied to the second degree are removed completely.

- Board Report 30543 from September 2010 contains the language “Students seeking a second degree or certificate must successfully complete a minimum of 15 additional credit hours at the college after the first degree has been posted to the student’s records.”
- Board Report 31867 in June 2013 does not contain the language in the question.
- This question indicates that one statement was replaced by another; this is not the case. Board Report 30543 in 2010 has *both* statements that are listed in the question. **The update in September 2013 (not June 2013) removes the first statement to increase clarity and because the additional 15 hour requirement is already in place.**

6) In 2013, by Board resolution 31999, language allowing “auto-award” of certificates is added to the student policy manual.

- This policy clarifies that CCC posts awards in the term when it is identified that requirements have been completed.
- Basic certificates and some advanced certificates had been “auto-awarded” prior to this policy clarification though all certificates are verified for having met program requirements.

7) In 2013, by Board resolution 31999, states that students who are “re-enrolling” after a break, or who change academic programs, are governed by the new course catalog and requirements.

- This is common practice that students are placed on new catalogs when being readmitted to an institution; the length of time varies and is within the purview of the institution. It is often after roughly one year. At CCC, this is currently defined as not being enrolled for two consecutive semesters, excluding the summer term. A forthcoming policy revision for November 2017 updates this to be three consecutive semesters to allow students who only need enrollment in the summer term to maintain their program requirements and do not need to reapply to the institution.

8) In 2014, by Board resolution 32264, policy is changed to drop the restriction that transfer students are not allowed credit for more than 45 hours from another institution.

- The limit of 45 transfer credits was removed because it was no longer needed -- the HLC-guided 15 credit (now 25%) residency requirement took care of managing how many transfer credits can apply to a credential.

9) In 2014, by Board resolution 32334, the number of credit hours required for an Associate of Arts degree is reduced from 62 to 60 credit hours, and of those general education requirements are reduced from 39 to 37 credit hours. In addition, a requirement for world language courses is removed completely.

- The policy manual sets the minimum standards for degree requirements and was changed to match the requirements set in the Administrative Rules of the ICCB (1501.301) and the Illinois Articulation Agreement (IAI) General Education Core Curriculum (GECC) general education minimum requirement.
 - World Languages are not a part of either ICCB’s or IAI’s minimum requirements.
 - A review of Illinois university language requirements was done in fall of 2014 that led to the decision to drop the requirement.
 - The research demonstrated that a number of Illinois transfer partner institutions did not require these foreign language courses in some or any of their majors, and in fact, by having the requirement, CCC was forcing students to take classes they would not necessarily be able to transfer towards their bachelor’s degree, costing them extra money and time.

10) In 2014, by Board resolution 32500, language is added to the student policy manual permitting CCC to “auto-confer” degrees. Also, language on requirements for a “second degree” is changed to “additional degree” raising the potential for third and fourth degrees to be awarded.

- **The language reads:** “The City Colleges of Chicago reserves the right to award a student’s academic plan of record, confirmed by the student, if all requirements for that degree have been met, even if the student has not applied for graduation.”

- **This policy is not “auto-conferral”;** it eliminates the need for students to apply to graduate and **still requires the student to confirm their academic intent before a degree will be awarded.**
- **That said, auto-conferral is considered a growing national best practice in the reform movement to “award credit when credit is due”, so if CCC were to move to full-fledged auto-conferral this would be entirely consistent with where reform is moving the field.**
- CCC supports lifelong learning and recognizes it is increasingly necessary in a highly technical and dynamic economy. The additional degree policy allows students to earn more than two degrees as long as the student has met all the requirements, including completion of credits after their previous degree.
- The instances of students earning multiple degrees are limited – just 2% of all degree recipients between FY10 and FY15 earned a second degree, and a mere .03% of degree recipients earned a third degree.
- **Once again, only a student’s highest degree counts towards the CCC graduation rate, and that is assuming that first degree meets the other IPEDS requirements too (first-time, full-time, complete in 150% time).** Students are only counted once in the IPEDS graduation rate.

11) In 2016, by Board resolution 32893, institutes a policy under which CCC “cannot confer a subordinate degree” to students who have already earned a higher degree. This loophole is closed more than 15 months after the program to “auto-confer” is adopted.

- First, there is no auto-conferral of degrees– every degree is reviewed for adherence to CCC program requirements and student intent is confirmed.
- Second, this policy – to not place students into AGS if they had already earned an AA/AS, for instance – was a codification of best/common practice that had been in place previously.
- **the awarding of second and third degrees without the required 15 additional credit hours,**
 - **Only a student’s highest degree counts towards the CCC graduation rate, and that is assuming that highest degree meets the other IPEDS requirements too (first-time, full-time, complete in 150% time).** Students are only counted once for the IPEDS graduation rate. **Even without taking into account all second and third degrees, City Colleges still more than doubled annual degree awards since the launch of Reinvention.**
 - That said, in 2013, CCC updated its policy language to make it clear that students only receive subsequent degrees with 15 additional credit hours earned at City Colleges. In 2015, CCC launched a new student data management system that helped to automate some of the standard practices that existed during the preceding 100 years of City Colleges’ history completely manual processes. This policy is now configured in the system and much less subject to human error.

- It bears repeating that additional degrees can be highly beneficial to a student's career path. It is often to a student's advantage to earn a credential while working toward a longer term goal because it is often beneficial for income and employability purposes.
- **calling students to promote the AGS program over the one in which they are currently enrolled,**
 - City Colleges had previously allowed students with sufficient credits for a degree to go years without knowing they had in fact earned a degree. Prior CCC leadership righted this situation.
 - Prior to Spring 2015, City Colleges was using a manual process for evaluating degree completion. When it became clear that CCC had numerous students who were never properly notified that they had earned a degree, students were informed that they had earned sufficient credits for a degree. This allowed students to claim their degree and potentially secure new employment, earn more money at an existing job, and/or move on to transfer to a four-year college.
 - The practice of calling students is now no longer necessary because City Colleges upgraded its student data management system in 2015, and for the first time in a century, degree audits became real-time such that students and advisors know at any moment how many credits students have earned towards their degree.
- **counting certificates such as the French Pastry School that prior to 2010 were not counted**
 - This is not correct. Per state guidelines, awards begin to be counted when the Illinois Community College Board temporarily approves a program.
 - In the case of the French Pastry School programs, L'Art de la Patisserie was temporarily approved by ICCB in 1999, which is when its awards had to begin to be counted, and L'Art du Gateau was temporarily approved by ICCB in 2010, which is when its awards had to begin to be counted.
- **Role of C2C**
 - College to Careers, including the alignment of curricula with employer and university demands, the organization of stackable credentials along pathways associated with career focus areas, and an employment infrastructure that had never existed before, among other aspects of the program, have been critical to City Colleges students' success.

About the students you spoke with:

- We would be happy to investigate the specific circumstances that surround the students you spoke to if you can share their information. Without knowing who these students are, we are not able to provide a response to their comments. There may be very good reasons for their particular outcomes, but without more information, it is impossible to know.

Second set of questions

12) Explain the genesis and purpose of the spreadsheet called *AGS Priority Wave One*, created on 2/5/13 by Elaine Liu? (The spreadsheet identifies 1350 students (65 in Fall 2012, and 1285 in Spring 2013, eligible for an AGS degree, by college.)

The answer for this question is in progress.

13) Please provide board and ICCB approval dates and documents for the following certificate programs: basic certificates and advanced certificates for

- communications technology certificates: ICCB approval only: BC – 8/28/13, AC – 10/31/13
- electrical construction technology at Richard Daley College: ICCB approval only: BC – 8/28/13, AC – 10/31/13
- advanced and basic certification approvals for computer information services at Harold Washington, CCC Board: predates available archives; ICCB: 1/12/79
- basic certificate for construction carpentry at Kennedy King CCC Board 2/9/06; ICCB: 9/7/06
- basic certificates for EMT-Basic and CCC Board: predates available archives; ICCB: 11/3/92
- Basic Nursing Assistant at Malcolm X.
 - 801: CCC Board: predates available archives; ICCB: 1/28/04
 - 403: CCC Board: 12/11/14; ICCB: 5/6/14

For programs missing CCC Board approval dates:

- *CCC Board archives do not go back past 1998*
- *Some programs may have been revised and changed names, which means they cannot be searched for in old board reports*

14) Please detail how many retroactive degrees and what types of degrees have been awarded since 2009 to date, by year and by degree type. CCC records show that from 2009 through 2015, a total of 2284 degrees were automatically conferred, including 1085 AGS degrees. Please provide this data through 2016. How many degrees were conferred through 2017 as a result of relaxed academic standards (as listed on previous requests) since 2010. How many current and former students would not have been eligible for degrees under the former, more stringent academic standards?

- The number and types of retroactive degrees awarded is provided on page 2 of this document.
- CCC degrees, whether or not they are retroactive, are not automatically conferred, as previously explained.

- Standards and policies were brought into alignment with state guidelines and/or best practice, as illustrated above.

15) How many students have been awarded AGS degrees after having already received another degree? According to City Colleges data from a FOIA response to Victory Research, there were at least 54 such instances from 2010 to 2017.

- 155 AGS degrees were awarded at the same time or after another degree.
- Our current policy allows an AAS to be earned before or after an AGS. If one removes the population who earned an AGS after an AAS, which is allowable, the number of AGS degrees awarded at the same time/after another degree is 118. These degrees were awarded before City Colleges had an explicit policy outlining this practice.

16) How many students were awarded AGS degrees in the same year as they were awarded a higher degree? According to City Colleges data from a FOIA response to Victory Research, there were at least 111 such instances from 2010 to 2017.

- See the answer to #15, which includes both #15 and #16. Only 46 of the 155 were in the same academic year.

17) How many students have been awarded an AGS prior to receiving another degree? According to City Colleges data from a FOIA response to Victory Research, there were at least 264 instances when students received a AGS prior to another, more rigorous, degree from 2010 through 2017.

- Since FY10, 371 students have earned an AGS prior to earning another degree.

18) Please explain the spiking rates in the number of AGS degrees awarded in comparison to all other degrees since the requirements to obtain the AGS were relaxed beginning in 2010? Published data from City Colleges of Chicago shows that the number of AGS degrees awarded went from 150 in 2010 to 1046 in 2016, a spike of nearly 600 percent.

- The proportion of AGS degrees awarded increased from FY10 (6% of degrees) to FY14 (32% of degrees), but has steadily declined to FY17 (17% of degrees), as previously explained, because AGS was the most flexible degree as City Colleges steadily improved the alignment of its degree pathways with transfer institution.

19) How many students were able to graduate within their cohort since 2010 because they accepted a faculty advisor's recommendation or request to accept an AGS and then continue on their original course plan? How did this practice affect City College's graduation rate?

- CCC doesn't have the position "faculty advisor." All responses that follow will assume the term that is intended is "college advisor."
- An AGS is a valuable degree offering maximum customization and flexibility.
- CCC had an obligation to inform students of all of their options, including notifying them if they met the requirements for a degree – especially since CCC did not have this capability when these students were previously enrolled.
- **Only the highest credential is counted per student, assuming students complete the credential within the IPEDS-defined timeline of 150% of normal time to completion (e.g. 3 years for a degree). Students are only counted once in IPEDS grad rate.**

20) How many students were awarded a second degree since 2010 even if they did not fulfill the City Colleges requirement for 15 additional course hours?

- Zero students based on CCC data. As previously noted, the degree review process was manual until Spring 2015, and human error could have occurred.

21) How does City College's policy allowing degrees and certificates to be backdated to the semester in which they were earned affect completion statistics in the year the degree was conferred? Is it possible for a degree conferred in 2015 to count toward 2015 completion statistics even though the degree was earned in 1995 and the student has not attended a class in 20 years?

- This is the opposite of CCC policy. CCC awards/dates in the term confirmed, not the term earned (if occurred in prior term). Policy citation:
Section 5.04 Degree or Certificate Conferral Date
Degrees and certificates are conferred on the last day of the term during which CCC confirms that all academic program requirements have been met.

22) A September 2015 CCC "Master Spreadsheet" identifies 812 former students who qualified for an AA degree and 2,583 former students who qualified for an AGS degree. It also identified 655 currently enrolled students who qualified for an AGS who were seeking higher degrees with the note: "Contact student to change program" as part of the "call center" "opt-in campaign." Please explain the genesis, purpose and results of the "opt-in campaign" the "call center" and the need to contact students in order to persuade them to change their programs? Please provide all training materials and manuals relevant to the call center, opt-in campaign, or the automatic conferral program.

- This has been previously explained. To reiterate, CCC has an obligation to inform students of all of their options, including notifying them if they have met the requirements for a degree – especially since we did not have this capability when these students were previously enrolled.

- Opt-in campaigns provided an explanation that the student met the requirements for a degree and the opportunity to provide consent in order to have that degree conferred.
- However, as you will read below in the description of the Institute for Higher Education Policy's Project Win-Win, "opt-in" is increasingly not considered best practice.
- Students were encouraged to speak with advisors both at CCC and at their intended transfer destination to check if receiving a degree would be the best fit for them.
- Students who do not plan to return to CCC are nearly always better off with an associate degree than with a high school diploma: this campaign was designed to explain the benefits of receiving a degree that the student had earned and to see if it was the right fit for the student.
- It is difficult for us to know how many students provided consent for their degree as a result of the Call Center campaigns since these students could have learned of their degree eligibility in a different way (i.e., visiting a staff member or requesting a transcript which did not have a credential listed). We do not record why a student confirms their intent to receive a degree.

23) **What was the genesis, purpose, effect, and results of the creation of this "Master Spreadsheet?"**

- CCC does not have pure caseload management software. Data about students is contained in several different systems and across a variety of platforms – most of which requires specialized knowledge to access. The Master Spreadsheet provides college staff with information about students that is easy to access and all located in one place, without the need for specialized technical skills.
- It has allowed college staff to prioritize their time and intervene with a specific group of students when it is most critical – for example, students who were at-risk of failing their courses, who had not received support services, or who were close to graduation. This ensured that staff time was focused on providing support to students who needed it the most. This data about students was previously unavailable to staff in student-facing roles, and has resulted in students getting the right intervention at the right time, leading to greater student success.

24) **How many degrees and certificates have been automatically conferred since 2010? How many automatically conferred degrees and certificates were awarded without the students' consent or knowledge?**

- **Degrees and certificates are awarded differently. At least as far back as Fall 2007, certificates have been awarded as soon as all requirements have been met by students and reviewed by City Colleges. Certificates do not require student confirmation. Degrees are awarded after review and with student confirmation.**

- All certificates are reviewed before being awarded to ensure requirements are met, and are “auto-conferred” in that no consent is required., . No degrees are “auto-conferred.” This was, until recently, a manual process, and human error is possible.

25) How many faculty advisors were on staff at City Colleges of Chicago in every year from 2008 to present? What was the budget for faculty advisors each of those years?

- Again, faculty advisor is not a position; this response assumes this reference is to a college advisor.
- The third key Reinvention strategy was to dramatically increase student supports, including the additional of wellness centers for social emotional support, transfer and career centers, veterans centers, and more advisors. At the beginning of Reinvention, the student to advisor ratio was 920:1, through strategic investments in advisors, this ratio is now better than 300:1.

FULL_PART	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17
FT	72	68	67	85	121	127	130	140	139	131
PT	14	14	13	15	8	6	4	3	4	3
Grand Total	86	82	80	100	129	133	134	143	143	134

FULL_PART	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17
FT	3,356,203	3,888,876	3,595,536	4,159,634	5,626,639	6,178,289	6,535,462	7,395,706	7,558,272	7,385,216
PT	327,768	350,496	275,293	225,324	171,566	109,867	89,042	106,706	102,082	66,032
Grand Total	3,683,971	4,239,372	3,870,829	4,384,958	5,798,206	6,288,157	6,624,504	7,502,412	7,660,354	7,451,248

26) When did City Colleges of Chicago create the “call center” as referenced in various spreadsheets and degree audits, such as the 2015 master spreadsheet? Was it staffed by faculty advisors? How many call center employees were on staff at City Colleges of Chicago in every year from 2008 to present? What was the budget for the call center employees in each of those years?

- The call center, in its current incarnation, was launched in FY14. It is staffed by representatives who take incoming calls, and also proactively assist with student information campaigns and gathering student feedback. An information center that was more focused on answering the phone predated the call center. (Still gathering data on the info center.)

FULL_PART	DESCR	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17
F	Call Center Manager	1	1	1	1
	Call Center Representative	17	16	16	11
	Call Center Supervisor	1	1	1	1
F Total		19	18	18	13
P	Call Center Manager-PT			1	1
	Call Center Representative-PT	1	1		1
P Total		1	1	1	2
Grand Total		20	19	19	15

FULL_PART	DESCR	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17
F	Call Center Manager	52,130.68	46,119.22	67,137.55	68,554.17
	Call Center Representative	409,379.61	513,569.52	416,021.32	315,004.44
	Call Center Supervisor	41,295.79	42,465.42	43,540.38	43,575.40
F Total		502,806.08	602,154.16	526,699.25	427,134.01
P	Call Center Manager-PT			13,970.70	23,532.32
	Call Center Representative-PT	19,384.98	-91.50		42,401.80
P Total		19,384.98	-91.50	13,970.70	65,934.12
Grand Total		522,191.06	602,062.66	540,669.95	493,068.13

27) I have done an analysis of two sources of degrees statistics, both originating from City Colleges of Chicago. One is the statistical digest published by City Colleges. The other is the data you supplied to Victory Research pursuant to its FOIA and purported to represent all the degrees awarded from 2010 forward.

Can someone please explain why the numbers do not match?

For instance, the statistical digests show the AGS degrees awarded from 2010 through 2016 at totaling 5,445, while the list you provided pursuant to the Victory Research FOIA shows only 4,183 AGS in the same time frame. I would like to know what accounts for the missing 1,262 AGS degrees. I would also like to know why the two data points do not match in all other categories of degrees.

- This is due to two factors. First, it is an issue of timing. The statistical digest was a summary of data near the end of the fiscal year and Victory Research data was pulled more recently and would incorporate any subsequent additions. Secondly, the Victory Research method only includes awards for enrolled students, while the statistical digest shows all awards for a given year.

“Awarding credit when credit is due” - National best practice examples:

City Colleges joined others in higher education in a national reform movement to “award credit when credit is due” to ensure students who earn degrees receive them in a timely fashion.

Independent organizations like the Lumina Foundation and the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), and other esteemed organizations in higher education have recognized the practice of retroactive degree awards as a key lever in a national goal of significantly increasing post-secondary degree attainment.

Based on its research from its “Project Win-Win” study, IHEP explicitly recommends that colleges move away from an “opt-in” degree award policy in order to promote student success.

Top universities, including the University of Illinois at Chicago, have endorsed the practice of awarding retroactive degrees to current students to help them foster meaningful employment and other opportunities while they continue their studies.

By removing institutional “red tape” and awarding students credits that they have already earned ensures that more students are on a path for success in career and four-year universities. An associate’s degree may signal to an employer that a student persisted in a program and completed it—a valuable point to include on a resume.

City Colleges has made significant improvements – from making its programs more relevant, to offering students greater supports, to providing students more structure across each of our seven campuses. In doing so, we have helped our students go on to lead better lives.

Responses to BGA:

General statement

- City Colleges dramatically reformed its policies and procedures over the last several years to align with national best practice, state and regional accreditors, as well as employer and 4-year university requirements, and ensure that students received the degrees they had earned.
- City Colleges has proactively taken steps to clarify policies and update systems to ensure that all degrees awarded meet requirements.
- **CCC culinary, AGS and retro degrees have value to our students and should be counted in any metrics for which they meet the definition. However, for your reference, should one remove ALL of these degrees from the degree total, City Colleges still nearly doubled the number of degrees awarded.**

	FY2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
Total Degrees	CCC Total									
CCC Total Degrees (excluding all culinary, AGS & retro)	Degrees	2,266	2,599	2,838	3,402	3,798	4,345	4,944	5,015	
		1,893	2,216	2,315	2,740	2,815	2,775	3,339	3,700	
Difference		-373	-383	-523	-662	-983	1,570	1,605	1,315	-942

There is still a 99 percent increase in the number of degrees awarded.

Chancellor Juan Salgado statement:

“Today, students are graduating and completing at more than double the rate prior to the launch of City Colleges’ reform efforts. We will continue to build upon national best practices to reduce barriers for students and increase the value of City Colleges credentials so that even more students reach their transfer and career goals.”

Additional questions

1. Retroactive degrees. As we discussed, I want to clarify the CCC policies regarding the backdating of degrees. How many retroactive degrees were identified since 2010, and awarded to students who earned them prior to 2009, by year and by degree. How and when were they counted for purposes of completion statistics?

Backdating is not related to retroactive degrees. Backdating occurs when the institution has made an error. Backdated degrees do not count in any completion metric.

Retroactive degrees are counted in the total degrees and total awards completion metrics. Beginning in FY2011, the overwhelming majority of retroactive degrees were awarded to students who were enrolled at CCC in FY2010 or later. See table below:

Retroactive Degrees FY2010 - FY2017 by Ending Cohort Term

	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017
Total Retroactive Degrees Awarded	247	261	157	166	718	817	462	252
Last enrolled term was FY2009 or earlier	204	82	20	9	16	43	26	20
Last enrolled term was FY2010 or later	43	179	137	157	702	774	436	232

Additionally, retroactive degrees may be included in IPEDS graduation rates if students earning a retroactive degree were a part of an IPEDS cohort (first-time, full-time student) AND the retroactive degree was awarded prior to the end of the 150% timeframe to graduation. **City Colleges is projecting a 18% graduation rate in FY17, and if you remove ALL of the retroactive degrees, the graduation rate would be the exact same.**

2. AGS degree. How specifically does the AGS degree fit in to Colleges to Careers, as according to the CCC academic catalog it is not tied to any particular vocation and is described as "intended for the student who is not pursuing a specified curriculum in the lower division transfer or professional-technical focus areas. A student may find that it may not fulfill all of the requirements of full juni or standing when transferred to a four-year institution."

Furthermore, in the backup materials to Board resolution 30543 the AGS is described as an "alternative for students to explore a range of subject areas without concentrating on any particular one or who are undecided about future educational or career goals ... the AGS is neither a transfer nor a career entry degree. While other colleges may accept credit earned toward this degree, no articulation agreements guaranteeing that the student will enter a Bachelor's Degree program with junior standing has been established."

College to Careers is a strategy that engages employers and universities to provide feedback on CCC's curriculum and facilities to ensure students are prepared for in-demand careers; it also has involved employers offering real-world learning opportunities, and access to paid internships and jobs to CCC students.

In regards to the AGS fitting in to College to Careers strategy: the AGS allows students to complete a basic certificate (BC) within their 40 elective requirements – some students complete a BC to allow them to seek higher paying employment in their field while they are still enrolled and working towards their AGS degree, consistent with the integration of stackable credentials into CCC's academic pathways. This is something we encourage and fits within the C2C strategy.

The higher education landscape in Chicago – not to mention the state and country – is complex and does not provide a simple one-size-fits-all solution for students who are planning to transfer. Therefore, the AGS is the best option for some students. The AGS is CCC's most flexible degree program and allows students to take the required courses for their intended transfer destination.

Many four-year universities do not guarantee junior standing for students who complete the AA/AS. The AGS allows students to take only the courses that are needed for their intended major. For example, prior

to changes to the AS (Associate in Science) in 2016, students who were planning to major in a hard science were better off getting an AGS than AS because the AS required students to take a combined 18 hours of humanities and social sciences, which were not needed upon transfer for the major. This meant that students could only take a handful of their hard science requirements, which are 4 or 5 credits each. When the student got to their four year university they would find that they had taken too many humanities/social science classes and not enough hard sciences – resulting in them being behind in their major coursework. This was resolved by ICCB changes to the AS degree in 2016 and is one reason that fewer CCC students are getting the AGS in the last year.

Academic planning is complicated. Every university and every major within each university require completion of unique classes; the AA/AS do not meet the requirements for every situation. The AGS is a means for some students to meet their goals and we encourage them to take advantage of the flexibility that it offers.

3. In your response to question number one, you stated that City Colleges of Chicago “cannot find mention of a 30 general education hour requirement for the AGS.” Are you suggesting that CCC does not know whether 30 hours was required prior to 2010? To that end, what was the general education requirement for an AGS degree prior to 2010? I would refer you to the backup material for the 2009 Board resolution 29352 which states under the subject line “Associate in General Studies (A.G.S.) degree” the following: “A minimum of thirty (30) of the required 60 semester hours must be distributed among the five general education areas of Communications, Mathematics, Humanities and Fine Arts, Socka dn Behavioral Sciences, and Physical and Live Sciences, with a minimum of two courses required in Communications and one course req tired in each of the other four area.”

The policy manual sets the minimum standards for degree requirements and was changed to match the requirements set in the Administrative Rules of the ICCB (1501.301).

- Board Item 29352 (p13 – AGS policy 2009) “minimum of thirty (30) of the required 60 semester hours [within the AGS] must be distributed among the five general education areas...”
- Revision: "this program requires successful completion of a total of 60 semester hours (20 *general education and 40 elective courses*) with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0..."
ICCB administrative rule 1501.302.a.3.B.v - “For the Associate in General Studies degree, the general education component required will represent no less than 20 semester credit hours or the quarter hour equivalent for completion.”

For clarification, general education courses are courses that transfer to four-year colleges as meeting those colleges’ general education requirements. However, there are many transferable courses offered at CCC that transfer to four year colleges, but not *as gen eds*. These courses include many of the upper level courses within the subject areas that make up general education course work, but do not count toward graduation as “gen eds” because that is not how they transfer. Many of these courses are in fact *more* advanced than the courses that count as gen eds.

4. The response to question 15 was not responsive. How many current and former students were awarded degrees under the changed academic standards? I am asking you for the specific consequences of all these changes on the number of degrees awarded, completions counted, and the graduation rate.

Changes to academic policy were guided by state and regional accrediting bodies and best practice. There is no way to determine how these changes impacted completions because changes in policy may have led to student behavioral changes, and there is no way to calculate unknowable hypothetical scenarios.

5. In the response to question 19, you did not answer the question about how many students were able to graduate within their cohort by accepting an AGS degree, including the 371 who were awarded an AGS prior to their other degree. Please answer this question and the question about how this practice affected the graduation rate.

A reminder that students are only counted once in the graduation rate, if they are counted at all due to federal IPEDS guidelines that dictate students must be first-time, full-time students and graduate within 150% time to count towards the rate.

The AGS degree is a degree with value that represents 60-plus credits a student has earned.

Of the 371 students who earned an AGS prior to an additional degree, the impact on IPEDS graduation rates by these students is minimal to non-existent.

- See table below:

	FY20 14 (FA1 1 Coho rt)	FY20 15 (FA1 2 Coho rt)	FY2 016 (FA1 3 Coh ort)*	FY2 017 (FA1 4 Coh ort)*
Grad Rate without students who earned an AGS prior to an additional degree and did not fulfill IPEDS graduation requirements with a different award within the timeframe. (These students should be counted, but for your reference they are being pulled out.)	14%	16%	17%	18%
IPEDS 150 Graduation Rate including these students	14%	17%	17%	18%

It is important to note that we do not capture why a student decided to earn a degree. It is impossible to fully answer the question of “how many students followed the advice of their advisor,” since we do not ask why students want their degree.

6. In the response to question 20, you acknowledged the potential for human error prior to the Spring of 2015. Was there potential for human error since Spring of 2015? How?

City Colleges has proactively strengthened its systems over the last several years, resulting in improved communication of and compliance with City Colleges policies. However, human error is still possible because degrees are verified by staff members who, like all people, can make mistakes.

7. In our conversation you said you were having trouble locating “AGS Priority Wave One” created by Elaine Liu on Feb. 5, 2013. Can you find anyone who remembers authoring it, seeing it, using it, or was involved in its development? If so, please put me in contact.

This document was not located.

8. In responses to questions 15, 16, and 17, you detail the 155 AGS degrees awarded at the same time or after another degree, 46 of which were in the same year. You also detailed the 371 students who earned an AGS prior to earning another degree. For those students who earned both degrees in the same year, how is it possible that all of them completed an additional 15 credit hours, as required by CCC policy? We have contacted a number of them who said they did not, in addition to students who earned an AGS after their first degree.

In Spring 2014, City Colleges identified an issue with the awarding of degrees in the same year and took corrective action to address these awards and to ensure policies and practices were in place to ensure degree awards complied with City Colleges policy.

All 46 of these degrees were awarded in 2014 or before. **Please note a student only counts once in the CCC graduation rate, if at all, so this had no impact on the graduation rate.**

City Colleges has since implemented system validations and checks to account for subordinate and/or same degree program declaration and enhanced its degree audit to double check for additional degree residency.

Degrees, however, are verified by staff members and it is possible human error can occur.

9. In your response to question number 13, you did not list the required CCC board approval dates for the communications technology certificates nor the electrical construction technology. Please provide those dates and the corresponding board minutes where those programs were reviewed.

The parent degrees of those programs were originally approved by the City Colleges Board of Trustees in 2002 (AAS in electrical construction technology) and in 2005 (AAS in communication technology). The Electrical Construction Technology and Communications Technology certificates were approved by ICCB as Reasonable and Moderate Extensions under the related degrees, and therefore did not require CCC Board approval.

9. French Pastry School. In your response to questions about reporting of completions regarding the French Pastry School you assert that CCC has always reported completions after the program was approved by CCC. This is refuted by completions CCC reported to IPEDS since 1999, which are

as follows. As you can see, there appears to be an enormous jump in the amount of French Pastry completers reported to IPEDS in 2010. Of the 269 graduates reported in 2010, 145 were identified as white, 52 as “unknown,” and 33 as black or hispanic. Please explain the statistics that suggest that French Pastry completers were under-reported prior to Reinvention.

BASIC CERTIFICATE (12.0501) Bakery & Pastry

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
0	11	11	10	18	0	0	0	0	24	1	269	211	191	2

City Colleges reported an error to ICCB and USDOE in FY2010, submitting completions that were overlooked in FY2009. The agencies appear to have reported these completions in FY2010 although CCC noted they were from FY2009.

10. Can someone please explain when and why the basic certificate requirements for taxi driving offered at Olive Harvey, CIP number 490205, went from six credit hours to three in 2015? Also, why even with the halved requirements, the number of completers in this program dropped from 1,764 in 2013 to 1,764 in 2016?

The change in requirements was informed by feedback from employers and the City of Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection, which regulates the taxi sector, to better align the program with industry needs.

The decline in students in the program aligns with the decline in certified taxi drivers throughout the city.