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City Tech Leads in Innovative Higher Education STEM Initiatives

Brooklyn, NY—August 17, 2015—This fall, City Tech will launch ASAP (Accelerated Study in Associate Programs), a program that has garnered national recognition, including a recent citation by President Obama for doubling the graduation rates of participating students. As part of The City University of New York’s (CUNY) initiative to expand ASAP beyond its community colleges, City Tech will provide ASAP services to students who are working toward an Associate degree. And City Tech will be the first college where ASAP will focus solely on students in STEM disciplines in the College’s School of Technology & Design.

Yelena Bondar is the director of ASAP at City Tech and is busy building a team and recruiting the first ASAP cohort. With more than 15 years of experience in higher education—starting while she was a student at Hunter College working in Advising—Bondar understands the challenges facing many of the students at CUNY.

“ASAP is a wonderful opportunity for City Tech students because of the additional financial, social and academic support it provides, which is especially helpful to students in more concentrated degree programs. With ASAP, students will have a ‘guardian angel’—an advisor to help them through red tape, set goals and work through problems and get to graduation. It’s really about finding a home for the students, building a community,” said Bondar. “I’m particularly excited to find out exactly how ASAP will function within a purely technical environment. For many students, gatekeeper math and technology courses are the hurdles they must overcome. ASAP will be there to give them an added boost to sail over the hurdles.”

Community colleges across the nation struggle with low rates of degree completion and transfer. CUNY designed ASAP to help students earn their Associate degree as quickly as possible, with a goal of graduating at least 50 percent of students within three years or less. It features small cohorts, consolidated schedules in which students take some courses with other ASAP students, personalized advising, financial assistance for textbooks, transportation, and tuition, and accelerated movement through remediation. ASAP was launched in 2007 for CUNY’s community college students, with support from the Office of the Mayor’s Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO).

CUNY found that the cost per student in an ASAP program was much higher than a typical college program, but graduation rates nearly doubled in three years, meaning the cost per *graduate* was actually lower. With these impressive outcomes, the Robin Hood Foundation and the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust joined CEO and CUNY in funding ASAP. And, thanks to support from the City of New York, ASAP will expand over the next four years from 4,300 to 25,000 students with a strong focus on serving more STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) majors CUNY-wide.

“In the past, retention experts studied the traditional student. Higher education now recognizes that students don’t come with a blank slate, students need support services in addition to academics so they can succeed while managing the rest of their lives. ASAP is not a curriculum-based program, rather it looks at the whole student and the needs of the student outside of the classroom,” says Bondar. “ASAP is not just about numbers—it’s also about building a positive and supportive campus environment.”

As CUNY’s only college of technology, City Tech leads the way in innovative STEM initiatives. City Tech is also the higher education partner to two STEM early college and career high schools, City Poly and P-Tech (Pathways in Technology Early College), which offer students a rigorous high school curriculum, college courses leading to an associate degree, and work experiences that prepare them for entry-level positions, particularly in high-growth STEM professions. President Obama recognized P-Tech as being a model for the country in education innovation and success.

Located in Brooklyn’s “Tech Triangle,” City Tech has become a major force in the development of skilled graduates ready for the high-tech careers that increasingly define the global economy. In fact, during the last decade, City Tech has seen rapid growth in student enrollment, increasing nearly 50 percent since 2003. This increase has been attributed to evolving workforce demands, new high-tech program development, and the growth of employment opportunities in new and existing firms.

City Tech’s degree programs provide a rare blend of specialized technological instruction and broad education in the liberal arts and sciences. Many of these programs are offered nowhere else within the CUNY system or in the New York metropolitan area. City Tech graduates are prepared to work in the current high-tech industries and—because of their education at City Tech—possess the ability to master new technology as it is developed.

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About City Tech (New York City College of Technology)

City Tech, of The City University of New York, is the largest four-year public college of technology in the Northeast and a national model for technological education. City Tech has an enrollment of more than 17,000 students in 25 baccalaureate and 27 associate degree programs. For more information, visit www.citytech.cuny.edu.

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