

## Project-19 Initiative

[▶ Project-19 at the 2023 CUNY Student Summit](#)

### Overview

The Project-19 Initiative is a platform that was designed to highlight student voices and concerns affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Started in Spring 2020, the initiative is centered on connecting students to necessary resources and services provided by CUNY and NYC and seeks to highlight innovative ideas and strategies offered by CUNY students themselves to improve student welfare. Project-19 envisions a university in which all students can gain the needed services and support necessary to provide the education they deserve. The video presentation “Let’s Get Back To the ABC’s: A Better Cuny” is a compilation of students across CUNY who will share their thoughts on how the pandemic affected them, what they wish they would see CUNY do to help them, and their vision of A Better CUNY.

### Call to Action

CUNY, both during and after the COVID-19 pandemic has changed tremendously, both institutionally and individually for its students, staff, faculty and alumni. After listening to the many responses, a general consensus of desiring to be heard and listened to by administration, wanting a greater access to resources and services that actually match what students want and recognizing them as human beings first rather than numbers or walking banks is what I conclude. Indeed, there are many beautiful aspects of CUNY that have equipped students to become free-thinking creative leaders (for example innovative classes, unifying programs such as the CUNY Peer Leaders Program) and conferences such as the CUNY TLH Student Summit. Pride swells up inside my heart when I see conferences and work like the Student Summit because it is evident that there are people of all backgrounds ranging from student to faculty who do care for our future, but we have much more work to do. This video should be used as a means to imagine and create A Better CUNY for all of us. Administration should prioritize voices of students who are often left in the background (parents, evening-class students, part-time students, BIPOC students, international and undocumented, and especially those who are on academic probation

and experiencing academic difficulties). Indeed, we want to highlight our brightest scholars and reward them for their excellent works, but not at the expense of all other students. We as a CUNY community should strive towards equity and ensure that each one's needs and desires are equally addressed. Whether it is through hosting focus groups that include a diverse range of students, increasing social media presence to address and reassure that issues are being handled, cross-collaboration between administration and CUNY organizations such as NYPIRG, PSC-CUNY or other innovative methods to boost unity and advocacy to make CUNY great.