

BY: Senator COMRIE

COMMEMORATING the 55th Anniversary of York
College, CUNY of Jamaica, New York

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend those institutions of true purpose and high achievement whose exemplary programs and accomplishments clearly demonstrate an enduring pursuit of excellence in higher education for the youth of this noble Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 55th Anniversary of York College, CUNY on Tuesday, April 5, 2022; and

WHEREAS, In the fall of 1967, York College first opened its doors to its 50 full-time instructional staff members and 371 students, largely white and American-born, using rented rooms from the Oakland Jewish Center in Bayside, Queens, for classes; and

WHEREAS, In May of 1968, in response to pressure from local business, community, and religious leaders, the CUNY Board of Higher Education selected Jamaica as the future site of York College's permanent campus; and

WHEREAS, However, when Milton G. Bassin took over the helm of President in 1971, York College was housed in temporary classrooms on the campus of Queensborough Community College in Bayside, New York; three years later, the College moved to a renovated ex-Montgomery Ward department store and other buildings in Jamaica; and

WHEREAS, Due to a period of financial instability, the fledgling College's future seemed uncertain; however, the residents of Jamaica pressured the city to keep the school open, and in May of 1978, the CUNY Board authorized construction of the new campus in Jamaica; and

WHEREAS, At the same time, York College expanded its liberal arts curriculum, offering career-related majors in the healthcare industry, and opened the Office of Continuing Education to give classes on practical subjects for Jamaica's residents; and

WHEREAS, With approval from then Governor Hugh Carey, construction on York College's permanent campus began in December of 1980; six years later, student enrollment had grown to 4,276, and the first classes were held in the new Academic Core; and

WHEREAS, In 1990, York College opened its Performing Arts Center and the Health and Physical Education facilities, followed by the athletic fields a year later; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Marcia V. Keizs assumed the role of President of York

College in 2005, and under her leadership, the college strengthened its academic quality through various initiatives; with the construction of the United States Food and Drug Administration's regional headquarters on the campus, students in relevant majors were able to take advantage of collaborative internships, fellowships, and research with world-class scientists; and

WHEREAS, In 2003, the CUNY Aviation Institute was established to prepare students for success in a rapidly changing industry; and

WHEREAS, In 2009, York College launched the Provost Distinguished Scholars Lecture Series, which attracts renowned writers, scholars, and scientists to speak to the College community; and

WHEREAS, In that same year, York College hired thirty-three new faculty members and reorganized its 18 academic departments into three schools, the School of Arts and Sciences, School of Business and Information Systems and School of Health and Behavioral Sciences; and

WHEREAS, Today, York College has grown from its humble beginnings to a student body of more than 8,300 students from 120 countries of origin, speaking more than 83 native languages; and

WHEREAS, Under the luminous leadership of current President Dr. Berenecea Johnson Eanes, York College plans to once again expand its campus, with a state-of-the-art Academic Village and a CUNY School of Pharmacy; and

WHEREAS, Steeped in a proud and distinguished history, York College may look back with pride upon its humble beginnings, find just satisfaction in its purposeful growth and hold true of purpose in its commitment to serving the educational needs of its students; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 55th Anniversary of York College; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Dr. Berenecea Johnson Eanes, President, York College, CUNY.