



How Would You Spend \$5,000 on Your Campus?

During the last academic year, this question was posed to the student body at Queens College. More than a thousand individuals responded and took part in an exciting process that puts power directly in the hands of students.

A Budget Innovation Imported from South America

Participatory budgeting (PB) is a process that allows everyday people to choose how to spend public money. It was first implemented in Brazilian cities in the late 1980s as a way to give voice to communities that had been ignored or repressed by previous political arrangements. PB has since expanded to more than 3,000 cities worldwide, including New York, where 28 city council districts now provide residents the opportunity to choose how to spend millions of dollars.

PB Takes Hold in CUNY System

Last year, Queens College became the second CUNY college, after Brooklyn College, to offer a PB process on campus. Queens College's process was designed and run entirely by students. The process was broken down into a few steps:

- ▶ Students propose ideas for campus improvements in brainstorming assemblies. These can take the form of public assemblies or in-class assemblies.
- ▶ Certain students from these assemblies volunteer to develop collected ideas into project proposals. These individuals are called budget delegates.
- ▶ Budget delegates work in project committees to develop feasible, high-impact project proposals, consulting with student government as needed.
- ▶ The entire student body is invited to vote on the finalized project proposals in a vote week. The projects with the most votes promptly get approved for funding.

PB Comes to Hunter College

In the upcoming academic year, students at Hunter College will have the opportunity to participate in the same process! The Hunter College USG has allotted \$5,000 to a PB-Hunter Process that will take place during the fall semester in 2016. Most Hunter College students will agree that our campus is in need of significant improvements. Through PB, students will be at the forefront of designing and choosing the types of projects that are most important to them.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

There are several ways to get involved in PB-Hunter. Applications for the steering committee—the central body that oversees and facilitates the PB process—will be available online within the coming weeks. This is an excellent opportunity for those who would like to be at the forefront of an exciting direct-democratic process on campus. PB-Hunter will also have a booth at the Street Fair on September 14, where Queens College students will be available to answer questions about their experiences with the process. To officially kick off the PB-Hunter process, we will be hosting a CUNY-wide PB conference at Hunter College on Friday, September 16. This event will feature trainings, workshops, and a keynote address by New York City Council members who support PB-CUNY. **If you have any more questions or comments, please send us an email at pbhunter@gmail.com.**