RESOLVED, that the City College of New York award Ms. Ursula Burns the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*; Dr. John O’Keefe, ’63, the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*; and Mr. John Legend, the degree of Doctor of Fine Arts, *honoris causa* at the City College 2015 annual Commencement Ceremony on May 29, 2015.

EXPLANATION: In 2009, Ursula Burns became the first African American female CEO of a Fortune 500 Company when Xerox appointed her to succeed Anne Mulcahy. She was also listed at Number 14 on the *Forbes* list of Power Women that year. In 2010 Ms. Burns became Chairwoman. She is a Founding Board Director of *Change the Equation*, an organization focused on improving the U.S. education system in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Additionally, she is Director of the *FIRST Foundation* (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology), striving to promote science, technology, and problem-solving to students of every age as a pathway to bright futures. Her commitment in the STEM fields, and specifically encouraging women and students from non-traditional socioeconomic backgrounds to pursue careers in the sciences, demonstrates leadership in harmony with the timeless values and current goals of City College.

EXPLANATION: Professor John Michael O’Keefe and Nobel Laureate is a native New Yorker and 1963 CCNY alumnus. He is a Professor at the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience and the Department of Cell & Developmental Biology at University College London and is the Director of the Sainsbury Wellcome Centre for Neural Circuits and Behavior, UCL. Professor O’Keefe is one of the most influential neuroscientists of our time. He has established a new field of research: The brain mechanisms underlying spatial navigation, and their possible link to memory. He made an absolutely pivotal discovery, that certain brain cells are active only when an animal is in a certain spatial location. The discovery of these now-famous “place-cells” led to a torrent of subsequent research, and a rethinking of how brain activity relates to cognition. For his pioneering research work, he has been named a Fellow of the Royal Society and of the U.K. Academy of Medical Sciences. He has won numerous awards and prizes, prominent among them the Gruber and Kavli Prizes in Neuroscience. This past year, Professor O’Keefe was awarded the well-deserved Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his co-discovery of cells “that constitute a positioning system in the brain.”

EXPLANATION: Recording artist, concert performer and philanthropist John Legend is a nine-time Grammy Award-winning soul artist; he was recently named one of *Time Magazine*’s 100 most influential people. His celebrated career as one of the most acclaimed singer-songwriters of this generation has led to numerous music industry awards and high profile performances, including at the White House. In addition to his successful career, John Legend works tirelessly to improve education. He is passionate about providing equal educational opportunities for every child. Outside of music, John Legend is involved in numerous social and charitable causes. He is a supporter of the Harlem Village Academies (HVA), a New York City organization that runs several charter schools and founded “The Show Me Campaign”, a nonprofit organization that fights poverty using proven solutions, with the hope that diminishing
poverty will lead to improved high school graduation rates and college attendance for the next generation.