

STUDENT, FACULTY and STAFF 2020 HIGHER EDUCATION PLATFORM

New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG)
State University of New York Student Assembly (SUNY-SA)
University Student Senate of the City University of New York (USS)
New York State United Teachers (NYSUT)
Professional Staff Congress/CUNY (PSC)
United University Professionals (UUP)

CUNY and SUNY Need a New Deal, Not Another Year of Flat Operating Budgets, Tuition Hikes, and Increasing Tuition Dependence. In a state as wealthy as New York, there is money to fully fund our public university systems, freeze tuition, and improve financial aid if those who benefit most from New York's economic system begin to pay their fair share. With increased revenue, the state can close its projected budget deficit and end the funding crisis at CUNY and SUNY. The staff shortages and reductions in student services have gone on too long. SUNY and CUNY need funding to cover their full mandatory operating cost increases, including collective bargaining. They also need funding to hire full-time faculty, to provide fair pay for adjunct faculty, and to expand advisement, counseling and other student services.

Increase State Investment, Not Tuition. When state investment does not keep up with rising operating costs, revenue from tuition hikes makes up the deficit. CUNY and SUNY students have paid at least \$2.5 billion in out-of-pocket increased tuition since the state's current public college funding model was established. But that burden has not resulted in improved services or ended the shortages of faculty and staff. **Students fundamentally reject higher costs associated with college, and this coalition implores the state to reject "predictable" tuition increases and increase state investment, not tuition, by allocating funding to freeze tuition at current levels (CUNY: \$36M, SUNY: \$50M).**

Eliminate the TAP Gap and Reinvest in CUNY and SUNY 4-year Colleges. New York state's policy of not funding the full Tuition Assistance Program awards of 190,000 CUNY/SUNY TAP recipients is accelerating disinvestment in CUNY and SUNY. By law, the universities must waive the difference between tuition (CUNY: \$6930, SUNY: \$7070) and \$5000 for full-time students receiving maximum TAP awards. Students who receive partial TAP awards receive partial tuition waivers. This "TAP Gap" grows with every tuition hike. Since 2012 it has cost public colleges nearly \$850 million. **This year, CUNY and SUNY will lose over \$160M, which we urge the State to cover (CUNY: \$79M, SUNY: \$82M).**

Stabilize and Increase Community College Funding. Both SUNY and CUNY community colleges are facing funding cuts due to enrollment declines. While the Legislature has increased per-FTE Base Aid for community colleges since 2008, the state is still not meeting its statutory obligation to fund 40% of their operating budgets. To smooth out volatility in their budgets, the community colleges should receive funding based on a three-year rolling average of their enrollment and a funding floor must be set at the FY2018 funding level. **CUNY and SUNY community colleges need an increase of \$41M this year (CUNY: \$14M, SUNY: \$27M).**

Invest in Student Success: Expand Opportunity Programs and Support Other Initiatives. Funding for New York's opportunity programs was not cut in the Executive Budget, creating an opportunity to increase, rather than just restore, investment in SEEK, College Discovery, the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC) and the Higher Education Opportunity Program. Restoration and increased funding is still needed for Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) and CUNY LEADS. These programs need funding to offer more spots for eligible students and increased services. Additionally, we urge the Legislature to restore funding for campus child care centers, provide additional funding for students with disabilities, and support initiatives to reduce textbook expenses and student food insecurity. Stress, anxiety and depression are major problems on college campuses. Yet, CUNY and SUNY lack the resources to mobilize adequate university-based responses. Funding to hire new on-campus counselors and expand SUNY's tele-counseling program must be added to the SUNY and CUNY operating budget allocations and must not burden students with additional fees.

Reform State Financial Aid. New York's investment in financial aid is admirable and last year's passage of the DREAM Act is a major achievement. But low-income part-time students are still poorly served by TAP and too few students benefit from the Excelsior Scholarship. Both programs should be reformed so that more students can qualify. Making state financial aid available in the summer and winter would also allow much-needed flexibility. Finally, DREAM Act implementation should be monitored to ensure that undocumented students' records are protected and that all who qualify have the opportunity to benefit.

Restore the State Subsidy for SUNY's Teaching Hospitals. SUNY's teaching hospitals train thousands of physicians and health care professionals while providing care to all residents in the community, regardless of ability to pay. Yet the SUNY Teaching Hospitals have lost \$515 million in state support since 2011-2012. We urge the Legislature to restore the \$87M state subsidy cut from the proposed Executive Budget and return the state subsidy to SUNY's teaching hospitals to the \$154M level of a decade ago.

Invest in SUNY and CUNY Infrastructure. Students learn more and faculty and staff are more productive when they have modern facilities and equipment, and a safe, healthy learning environment. But state funding to fix and build New York's public colleges should be allocated based on the needs of the colleges, not based on the private fundraising prowess of the college presidents, or the wealth of their alumni networks. We urge the Legislature to directly allocate funds to support SUNY and CUNY capital requests.