

CUNY: GOVERNOR ANDREW CUOMO'S AUSTERITY POLICY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Maintenance-of-Effort Legislation and a History of Disinvestment in CUNY

1. State funding for CUNY, in real-dollar per-student terms, has not recovered from the 2008 recession. It is 14% below the 2008-09 level;¹ under Cuomo it has remained essentially flat.
2. Since coming into office in January 2011, Governor Andrew Cuomo's fiscal priority has been to limit increases to all State agencies' operating budgets to 2% per year.² CUNY is not technically a State agency, but funding for CUNY four-year colleges and graduate programs has been held to this austerity standard. In the current academic year (FY 2016), State aid rose just 1.4%, while tuition revenues rose 5.9%.³
3. Approximately 45% of CUNY funding now comes from student tuition. Of the public funding, the State is the chief source for CUNY senior (four-year) colleges and University programs (including graduate schools). The State also contributes some funding to the community colleges. Principal responsibility for funding the community colleges rests with the City. Tuition covers an increasing percentage of the total CUNY operating budget.
4. In his first year in office, Governor Cuomo proposed and the Legislature passed SUNY2020, a 5-year schedule of annual \$300 tuition increases (\$1,500 in total.) Full-time senior college tuition at CUNY is now \$6,330. At the community colleges, tuition is now \$4,800.⁴ Those figures represent a 38% increase at the four-year colleges and a 45% at the community colleges.
5. SUNY2020 promised to maintain State spending at a level needed to cover mandatory cost increases including fringe benefits, so that increased tuition paid by students could be dedicated to improvements. Cuomo himself pledged:

Coupled with the NYSUNY2020 commitment to provide a consistent level of State General Fund support, the rational tuition policy makes it possible for the public university systems to add faculty, reduce class size, expand program offerings, and improve academic performance.⁵

6. The promise of SUNY2020 has been broken—repeatedly. Because of the Governor's 2% austerity limit, State funding has not kept up with growing enrollments or inflation, and new tuition has been used to make up the difference. The difference this year is \$51 million.

¹ Adjusted for inflation with the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) issued by the Common Fund Institute.

² Governor budget address 2014 <http://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-years-budget-more-numbers-its-innovative-action-plan-will-build-and-shape>

³ CUNY Office of Budget & Finance: FY 2016 State Enacted Budget Analysis, <http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/bf/whats-new/FY2016StateEnactedBudgetAnalysis.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.cuny.edu/admissions/tuition-fees.html>

⁵ 2014-15 New York State Executive Budget, <http://www.budget.ny.gov/pubs/archive/fy1415archive/eBudget1415/fy1415littlebook/HigherEducation.pdf>

7. Cuomo's decision not to invest in CUNY has a disproportionate impact on the poorest New Yorkers and on communities of color. Among CUNY undergraduates, 77% are people of color; 42% are members of the first generation in their families to attend college; 37% are immigrants;⁶ and 54% come from families with annual incomes of less than \$30,000.⁷
8. Higher tuition and enrollment have somewhat disguised the impact of the State's disinvestment, but the effect is beginning to be felt. This fiscal year the senior colleges at CUNY have been forced to take 3% hit to their core operating budgets.⁸ As a result, courses and programs have been cut, faculty and staff hiring has been curtailed, adjunct faculty have been notified that their employment at CUNY will end. At the Graduate Center, CUNY's premier research campus, the cut has meant hiring freezes in many departments and cuts to such basic services as IT support.
9. CUNY's shameful reliance on underpaid part-time labor for its core function—teaching—has deepened under Cuomo's austerity program. The University has been unable to make progress on its stated goal to hire sufficient numbers of full-time faculty to lower student-to-faculty ratios. Instead the percentage of courses taught by full-time faculty has not budged in five years and has actually worsened at the senior colleges, where full-time faculty teach fewer than 44% of the undergraduate courses.⁹
10. CUNY provided a tuition-free education beginning in 1847 for full-time matriculated students, and was fully open to all city residents between 1970 and 1976. By 1976 there had been a dramatic demographic shift in CUNY's undergraduate population, and the University began charging tuition in response to the City's fiscal crisis.
11. CUNY's 25,000 faculty and professional staff make college possible for 275,132 students enrolled in degree-granting programs¹⁰ and 247,000 students in certificate-granting and continuing education programs¹¹ – or close to a half-million New Yorkers.
12. Most CUNY graduates continue to reside in New York; 67% in the city and 82% in the state. CUNY colleges graduated 47,776 students in 2014, including 14,589 with associate and

⁶ A Profile of Undergraduates at CUNY Senior and Community Colleges 2014,
http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/ira/ir/data-book/current/student/ug_student_profile_f14.pdf

⁷ 2014 CUNY Student Experience Survey,
http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/ira/ir/surveys/student/SES_2014_Report_Final.pdf

⁸ <http://www.psc-cuny.org/clarion/october-2015/budget-cuts-hit-senior-colleges>.

⁹ University Performance Management Report 2014 (pages 1-3)
http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/ira/ir/data-book/current/accountability/PMP_University_Data_Book_2015_final_20150806_v2.pdf

¹⁰ CUNY Office of Institutional Research (OIRA)
http://www.cuny.edu/irdatabook/rpts2_AY_current/ENRL_0001_UGGR_FTPT.rpt.pdf

¹¹ OIRA http://cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/ira/ir/data-book/current/enrollment/trends_ace_5yr_08_12.pdf

22,498 with baccalaureate degrees.¹² CUNY graduates are an essential part of the educated workforce locally and regionally.¹³

Refusal to Allocate Funding for New Contracts for CUNY Employees

13. While the Maintenance-of-Effort bill hangs in the balance, Governor Cuomo continues to refuse to allocate any funding to cover the State's share of the cost of collectively bargained increases for CUNY employees. The most recent contract between the Professional Staff Congress and CUNY expired in October 2010. The most recent raise was in October 2009. The CUNY faculty and staff represented by the PSC have not had a contract in more than five years and a raise in more than six. (There are more than 10,000 other CUNY employees, largely represented by AFSCME. They have been without a contract even longer than PSC members.)
14. As a result of the failure to provide contractual salary increases for half a decade, academic departments have experienced increasing difficulty recruiting new faculty and retaining current faculty. CUNY's 7,600 full-time faculty earn salaries that lag far behind those at comparable public universities in the region and that do not reflect increases in the cost of living, especially New York City housing costs. There is a real cost in terms of educational quality as CUNY becomes less competitive.
15. CUNY's 10,500 part-time adjunct faculty, who teach more than half of the University's courses, have a starting salary of less than \$3,000/course. While some adjunct faculty have other full-time employment or pensions, at least 2,000 earn their living entirely through a patchwork of adjunct teaching. These adjuncts struggle to make ends meet living in New York City with annual incomes between \$25,000 and \$30,000. They also have had no raise in six years.
16. CUNY's 4,600 professional administrative staff have also not seen any increase in their base pay in six years.
17. CUNY is a unified system of two-year, four-year and graduate institutions, and thus contracts with its employees require funding from both the State and City. Other State quasi-governmental agencies, including the MTA, are similarly structured.
18. Collective bargaining for all 153 unions that negotiate with the City was stalled during the final years of Bloomberg's term because of Bloomberg's insistence on three years of wage freezes. When De Blasio became mayor, he made it a priority to settle the outstanding contracts, and began with the UFT contract in May 2014. In this round of negotiations, the City has signaled to the PSC leadership that it will fund its share of a settlement for CUNY employees at a level consistent with the contracts settled with other public-sector unions.

¹² OIRA http://www.cuny.edu/irdatabook/rpts2_AY_current/DEGR_0007_DEG_TRND_CUNY.rpt.pdf

¹³ CUNY Office of Policy Research Brief: "Do CUNY Graduates Stay in New York?" (undated)
http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/ira/opr/briefs/NY_Residency_Research_brief_v_11_rev20121022.pdf

19. Governor Cuomo, however, has refused to fund the State's portion of a settlement, including retroactive raises. The economic offer the CUNY administration made to the PSC on November 4, after the PSC had staged numerous demonstrations and a sit-in, reflected the State's refusal to allocate additional funds. CUNY's economic offer is:

2010: 0%
2011: 0%
2012: 0%
2013: 0%
2014: 1% (on April 20)
2015: 1% (on April 20)
2016: 3% (on April 20) + 1% (on October 19)

20. At 6% over 6 years with very little retroactive increase, CUNY's offer falls below the level of inflation. (See PSC's statement on CUNY's offer for further detail.¹⁴) CUNY negotiators have stated that their offer represents what the University is able to provide within its existing budget, without State funds to cover any increases. If implemented, CUNY's proposal would mean that CUNY employees are the only public employees in the city or state not to receive a 4% increase for 2010. A fair settlement will not be possible without additional State funds.

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¹⁴ <http://psc-cuny.org/our-campaigns/cunys-unacceptable-offer>.