

STUDENT AND FACULTY HIGHER EDUCATION PLATFORM

New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) • University Student Senate of the City University of New York (USS)
New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) • Professional Staff Congress/CUNY (PSC) • United University Professions (UUP)

Increase public investment in CUNY and SUNY. Since 2008, CUNY and SUNY have lost \$1.5 billion in State funding, threatening the quality of public higher education and shifting the burden to students through tuition hikes. The Executive Budget holds state spending to less than 1% for both systems, and in a new move, would require New York City to take over 30% of the cost of CUNY's 4-year senior colleges. CUNY and SUNY need *more* investment – *not less* – to assure that students throughout the state have a quality college education. The Legislature should fully fund SUNY and CUNY, and invest in additional full-time faculty, improving course offerings and students services. Begin by moving \$30 million (i.e. \$18 million for SUNY and \$12 million for CUNY) in “performance funding” to the universities’ operating budgets.

Reject annual tuition hikes and freeze tuition. SUNY2020, the State’s so-called “rational tuition” law, raised tuition \$1,500 over the last five years. Tuition is now \$6,470 at SUNY and \$6,330 at CUNY, a more than 30% spike since 2011. Prior to the 2008 recession, tuition covered about half of SUNY’s budget and less than 40% of CUNY’s budget. Now, tuition covers more than 50% of SUNY’s and CUNY’s operating budget. Annual tuition hikes mean college students and their families are taking on the greater burden. The Legislature must reject extending SUNY2020 for five more years and freeze tuition instead.

Require a real Maintenance of Effort provision in the budget. The Executive Budget fails to fund the university systems’ projected cost increases for regular operating costs like energy or rent, and contractual salary increases. Unfortunately, these costs have been paid for through annual tuition increases, so new tuition revenues could not go to enhancing students’ education. That promise was not kept. The Legislature should restore \$101 million to cover current inflationary cost increases at CUNY and SUNY, and enact a genuine maintenance of effort that covers all mandatory cost increases for CUNY, SUNY and the SUNY hospitals going forward.

Reject the proposal to shift 30% of the cost of CUNY 4-year senior colleges to New York City. The Executive Budget would shift \$485 million in state-funded costs for CUNY senior colleges onto the NYC budget. That proposed reduction in State funds is paired in the Executive Budget with a critical \$240 million “to support retroactive salary increases needed to ensure fair and affordable agreements with CUNY’s labor unions.” We urge the Legislature to ensure that this collective bargaining funding is included in the enacted budget and to reject the fundamental restructuring of CUNY funding, so that CUNY senior colleges are funded by the State in the same way that SUNY senior colleges are funded.

Increase community colleges Base Aid by \$250 per FTE. Community colleges currently receive \$78 less per FTE student in Base Aid (or \$478 per FTE adjusted for inflation) than they did in 2008-09. Restoring Base Aid will reduce pressure to raise tuition and protect educational quality. The State should fund 40% of community colleges’ operating budgets, as set by law. Start by adding \$250 per FTE.

Reform the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) and pass the NY DREAM Act. Undocumented students, most part-time students, incarcerated students, and students who exceed TAP’s limit of eight semesters cannot receive TAP. Financially independent students without dependents have a hard time qualifying for TAP, and receive smaller awards when they do qualify. The Legislature should pass the NY DREAM Act this session and enact the reforms called for by the Coalition to Reform the NYS Tuition Assistance Program.

Restore State funding 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. We urge the Legislature to restore subsidies to SUNY’s teaching hospitals by \$59 million to \$128 million.

Protect opportunity programs and other initiatives. Protecting and increasing funding to proven opportunity programs like the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP), Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC) at SUNY, SEEK, College Discovery, and CUNY LEADS, and CUNY’s nationally-recognized Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) will make college more accessible. Additionally, we urge the Legislature to restore funding for child care centers on SUNY and CUNY campuses to the levels of last year’s enacted budget.

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