

CUNY STUDENT/FACULTY/STAFF 2014 PLATFORM

New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG)
University Student Senate of The City University of New York (USS)
Professional Staff Congress/CUNY (PSC)

Invest in CUNY to Provide Students with an Education for the New Economy

CUNY, especially its community colleges, is the gateway to opportunity for record numbers of New Yorkers now graduating high school. However, dwindling public funds and rising costs have left CUNY with far less than is needed to provide the quality education services that every student deserves. Instead of continuing to rely on increasing tuition to make up for shortfalls, the Council should support CUNY's full budget request with increased public funds for CUNY community colleges this year. Protecting community college students from next year's \$300 tuition hike would require \$24.2 million in additional City funds. Raising tuition to fill gaps in CUNY's operating budget increases the burden on students, forcing many into debt, to drop out or to work long hours which competes with their studies and undermines their progress toward graduation. It's time for a new direction. As the Mayor has outlined, CUNY plays a critical role in New York City's future economy and Council support would help ensure access and a quality education for all CUNY students.

Fund New Full-time Faculty and Student Services with Public Dollars

CUNY needs City funding for new full-time faculty lines, new counselors and expanded student services to help students get the classes, support and mentoring they need to graduate on time. A substantial number of new faculty can be recruited from existing part-time faculty who have already demonstrated ability to succeed with CUNY students. New investments will help students get the classes necessary to complete their course of study, reduce class sizes, and provide more opportunities for internships and other programs that enhance students' college experience in and out of the classroom. The Council should support CUNY's budget request to add faculty and student services.

Expand Access to CUNY with City-Funded Financial Aid

The City Council has called for the creation of a merit scholarship called the Academic Achievement Award (AAA) for high-achieving graduates of New York City high schools, including undocumented students. This is a promising development. Over the past five years, critical New York City scholarships—both merit- and need-based—have been defunded. Half of all CUNY students receive a federal Pell Grant and a state Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) award. But many students have no access to merit-based aid, Pell, or TAP. TAP excludes undocumented students, most part-time students and students who exceed the program's eight-semester limit. Financially independent students without dependents receive very little TAP aid. The proposed AAA scholarship will assist New York City's brightest to attend college, but the Council can do more. The AAA scholarship should cover current students, and a need-based city scholarship should be provided to low-income students who receive little financial aid or none at all.

Restore Council-Supported CUNY Initiatives and Make Them Part of CUNY's Annual Baseline Budget

Enrichment programs such as the Creative Arts Team and the Civic Justice Corps, along with the Murphy Institute for Worker Education and Labor Studies, Center for Puerto Rican Studies, and Dominican Studies Institute have all benefitted CUNY students. Unfortunately, these CUNY initiatives were not funded in the Preliminary Budget. As in past years, it has been left to the City Council to fund them with discretionary funds. The City Council should restore funding for these programs and initiatives to 2008-2009 levels. The Council should also press to make traditionally Council-funded budget items part of the baseline budget for CUNY.

Fully Fund CUNY's Capital Budget Request

Students learn more and faculty and staff are more productive when they have modern equipment, decent facilities and a safe, healthy learning and working environment. The new Fiterman Hall at BMCC and recent projects at Hostos Community College and Bronx Community College have led to real improvements in learning and working conditions at CUNY. But there is so much more to do. Students and faculty support CUNY's five and ten-year capital budget requests. We join the University in urging you to fight for funding CUNY's 2014/15 critical maintenance and construction needs.

NYPIRG: Aileen Sheil, Chairperson, 212-349-6460

USS: Cynthia Roldan, USS Vice Chair for Legislative Affairs, 646-344-7280

PSC: Kate Pfordresher, Director of Research and Public Policy, 212-354-1252