



To: SUNY University Faculty Senate
From: Communications Committee
RE: Executive Budget Resolution
Date: 189th Plenary, October 7-9, 2021
Location: Online
Resolution #: 189-02-1
Vote: For: 43 / Against: 0 / Abstain: 2

RATIONALE:

WHEREAS the State University of New York (SUNY) and the City University of New York (CUNY), like other public higher education systems across the nation, in fulfilling their core academic missions, transform students' lives and life chances and serve their state as foundations for democracy, platforms for civic engagement, engines of economic development, pathways to the middle class, magnets for population growth and private investment, and generators of health, creativity, and innovation¹; and

WHEREAS SUNY and CUNY had not fully recovered from the Great Recession when the COVID-19 pandemic imposed new risks, costs, stresses, and responsibilities on their students, staff, faculty, and leaders, with especially heavy burdens on their frontline student- and patient-facing workers; and

WHEREAS significant Federal pandemic relief funds have been made available to SUNY and CUNY campuses, yet those funds provide only short-term offsets to drops in recurring State support; and

WHEREAS Governor Hochul and the New York State Legislature have a unique opportunity to make New York State a national leader in sustainably and equitably supporting and advancing SUNY and CUNY's core academic missions; and

WHEREAS the SUNY University Faculty Senate (SUNY UFS) has worked closely in recent years with the SUNY Faculty Council of Community Colleges (SUNY FCCC) and the CUNY University Faculty Senate (CUNY UFS), and in alliance with the SUNY Student Assembly (SUNY SA), United University Professions (UUP), and the CUNY Professional Staff Congress (CUNY PSC) in advocating for New York State to become a national leader in investing direct state aid in SUNY and CUNY's core operating budgets²;

RESOLUTION:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the SUNY UFS urges Governor Hochul to craft an Executive Budget that makes New York State a national leader in sustainably and equitably supporting and advancing SUNY and CUNY's core academic missions by

- significantly increasing the share of public funds going to public higher education core operating budgets and decreasing the share of SUNY and CUNY core operating costs paid for by student tuition and fees, through such means as
 - fully funding all negotiated contractual increases;
 - fully funding other mandatory operating cost increases for *all* SUNY and CUNY institutions, thereby augmenting New York State's commitment to a robust maintenance of effort for SUNY and CUNY;
 - restoring essential mission funding to SUNY hospitals, thereby recognizing their crucial contributions to the capacity and resilience of New York State's medical and public health infrastructure;
 - immediately and permanently pegging the maximum Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) award to SUNY tuition each year and sunsetting the SUNY/CUNY Supplemental TAP Awards, thereby both closing and ending the TAP Gap;
 - pegging the maximum Excelsior Scholarship award to SUNY tuition and simplifying eligibility requirements;
- fully funding requests by the SUNY and CUNY Boards of Trustees for five-year capital plans addressing critical maintenance and new capital projects, as well as necessary accessibility upgrades to older buildings; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the SUNY UFS calls on all SUNY campus governance bodies, along with all friends and all other good-faith partners of SUNY and CUNY, to speedily pass resolutions aligned with ours, and in those resolutions to encourage all students, alumni, donors, and current and former workers in or members of their body, in their capacity as citizens or residents of New York and/or supporters of public higher education, to urge Governor Hochul to make New York State a national leader in sustainably and equitably supporting and advancing SUNY and CUNY's core academic missions.

BACKGROUND:

1. According to a November 2018 Rockefeller Institute report, SUNY's economic impact is \$28.6 billion (\$6.83 billion in Long Island, \$4.37 billion in Western NY, \$3.94 billion in Central NY, \$3.43 billion in the Capitol Region, \$2.98 billion in the Southern Tier, \$2.53 billion in New York City, \$1.6 billion in the Hudson Valley, \$1.32 billion in the Finger Lakes, \$.82 billion in the Mohawk Valley, and \$.78 billion in the North Country); every dollar invested in SUNY returns \$8.17; and 78 percent of SUNY's 633,000 bachelor's degree graduates in 2006 worked in New York two years after graduation and 64 percent remained in the state eight years later.

According to higher education scholars Walter McMahon and Christopher Newfield, decision-makers consistently underestimate higher education's private non-market goods (on one's health, longevity, happiness, human capital, working conditions, job type and benefits, control over consumption, savings, and family size, and children's education and cognitive

development), indirect private market benefits, nonmarket private benefits (both direct and indirect), and social goods (both direct and indirect), leading to an overemphasis on the “personal monetary benefit of a college degree,” although this is really “only about one-third” of its “overall value” (Newfield 71).

2. See, for instance, the joint statement from the Executive Committees of SUNY UFS, SUNY FCCC, and CUNY UFS from January 2016, “Invest in CUNY and SUNY,” SUNY UFS’s January 2019 “New Deal for SUNY and CUNY” resolution, and SUNY UFS’s January 2020 “SUNY/CUNY Budget” resolution.

Policy-makers need to take a hard look at New York State’s ranking in standard measures of the fiscal health of public higher education, including

- SUNY’s and CUNY’s shares of NYS’s general fund;
- NYS general fund shares of SUNY’s and CUNY’s core operating budgets;
- appropriations of NYS general funds for operating expenses of SUNY and CUNY per \$1,000 of personal income in NY;
- appropriations of NYS general funds for operating expenses of SUNY and CUNY per capita in NY.

More general measures provide some insight into these matters.

NYS’s Appropriations and Rank of State Tax Funds for Operating Expenses of Public and Private Higher Education per \$1,000 Personal Income and per Capita, 2008, 2014-2021

fiscal year	/\$1K	rank	/capita	rank
2008	\$5.70	38	\$266.17	23
2014	\$4.92	37	\$269.98	20
2015	\$5.00	32	\$281.37	16
2016	\$4.85	34	\$286.96	19
2017	\$4.77	34	\$291.99	20
2018	\$4.66	34	\$302.76	16
2019	\$4.60	34	\$314.58	16
2020	\$4.39	37	\$314.12	18
2021	\$3.97	35	\$311.81	19

Source: Grapevine

What good reason can there be for New York State to be outside the top 20 in appropriations per \$1,000 or the top 10 in appropriations per capita? Clearly, we have the capacity to be a true national leader; Governor Hochul is now in position to make us one.

NYS’s Rank among States on State Support (mostly tax revenues and lottery profits) in Constant Adjusted Dollars for Operating Expenses of Public Higher Education per \$1,000 Personal Income, per Capita, per Student FTE, as Share of Total State Revenues, and as Student Share (net tuition revenue as a percentage of total state revenue), 1980, 2001, 2008-2020

FY	/\$1K (rank)	/capita (rank)	/FTE (rank)	State allocation (rank)	Student share (rank)
1980	7.7 (34)	313 (25)	11,504 (9)	5.7% (44)	20% (16)
2001	5.2 (44)	297 (38)	11,307 (20)	3.8% (48)	30% (23)
2008	5.9 (36)	352 (27)	11,589 (15)	3.9% (45)	30% (13)
2009	6.4 (36)	367 (21)	11,646 (8)	4.2% (46)	30% (12)
2010	6.1 (34)	358 (25)	10,956 (9)	4.2% (45)	33% (15)
2011	5.9 (30)	359 (19)	10,802 (7)	4.0% (44)	33% (12)
2012	5.3 (29)	329 (20)	9,873 (8)	3.6% (44)	36% (9)
2013	5.5 (29)	337 (16)	10,293 (8)	3.6% (44)	36% (9)
2014	5.4 (29)	341 (16)	10,525 (7)	3.6% (44)	36% (9)
2015	5.4 (30)	349 (15)	10,832 (7)	3.6% (44)	36% (10)
2016	5.3 (31)	349 (14)	10,984 (6)	3.5% (45)	37% (10)
2017	5.2 (34)	355 (14)	11,121 (7)	3.7% (44)	36% (11)
2018	5.2 (28)	363 (12)	11,351 (6)	3.5% (44)	34% (9)
2019	5.1 (30)	366 (13)	11,585 (6)		34% (10)
2020			11,657 (8)		34% (12)

Source: State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO)

How have these kinds of funding decisions affected student debt in New York State?

Student Debt, by United States Average, New York State Average and Rank, Percentage of New York State Students Graduating with Debt and Rank, New York State Public Four-Year Average, and Percentage of New York State Public Four-Year Students Graduating with Debt, 2008-2019

Grad Yr	US ave	NY ave (rank)*	NY %age (rank)*	NY 4Y Public ave	NY 4Y Public %age
2008	\$21,167	\$23,580	62%	\$18,026	56%
2009	\$22,522	\$25,590	63%	\$20,911	56%
2010	\$23,540	\$26,360	61%	\$21,706	55%
2011	\$24,854	\$25,764 (19)	60% (25)	\$20,561	54%
2012	\$25,903	\$25,686 (27)	60% (23)	\$20,875	55%
2013	\$26,406	\$26,371 (25)	60% (26)	\$21,720	55%
2014	\$27,052	\$27,822 (19)	61% (25)	\$23,774	53%
2015	\$27,992	\$29,320 (18)	59% (31)	\$24,307	52%
2016	\$28,711	\$30,303 (15)	58% (27)	\$25,967	58%
2017	\$29,000	\$30,931 (13)	60% (15)	\$26,380	54%
2018	\$29,200	\$31,127 (15)	59% (17)	\$26,456	56%
2019	\$28,950	\$31,155 (16)	58% (22)	\$27,638**	73%**

Source: College Insight

*Ranked from highest to lowest in student debt and percentage of students graduating with debt; that is, the closer to #1, the more student debt or the more students in debt there are in a state.

**Based on data for SUNY campuses only, as reported by College Insight

Imagine a New York State in which instead of slowing the rates of increase of average student indebtedness and the share of indebted students in SUNY and CUNY, Governor Huchul were to lead a more ambitious effort to significantly reduce both.

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