

UUP blasts state budget slash and sweeping ‘flexibility’ proposal

UUP never expected good news in the days and weeks before the governor took the wraps off his proposed state budget. Unfortunately, the news was worse than expected.

First, on Jan. 15, the governor revealed an initiative in his proposed budget called the Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act that would bring so-called “flexibility” to the entire SUNY system.

“This proposal would move the university dangerously close to privatization,” UUP President Phil Smith warned.

Four days later, on Jan. 19, the governor unveiled his complete Executive Budget that once again slashes spending for SUNY.

The proposed 2010-11 budget would trim SUNY’s operating budget by another \$118 million. Combine that with the \$410 million in state support that SUNY has lost in the past two years, the University would be losing more than half a billion dollars in direct state funding, or \$528 million to be more precise.

UUP’s strong response

UUP responded immediately in its efforts to prompt state lawmakers to amend the budget.

“SUNY is already suffering under the enormous weight of the previous budget cuts, with larger class sizes and fewer course offerings, robbing more and more students of the ability to graduate on schedule,” Smith said in a news release issued hours after the budget was revealed. “Any new reductions could deny the next generation of New Yorkers the opportunity to learn the skills they need to support themselves and to become the employees New York needs to attract new business.”

Smith urged state lawmakers to reject the \$118 million cut to SUNY.

But UUP’s concerns go far beyond finances.

The governor’s “flexibility” proposal would allow campuses to set their own tuition rates without legislative approval, and enable them to enter into leases, contracts and joint ventures with less oversight than currently exists.

‘No’ to differential tuition

Smith took aim at the proposal, reminding reporters that every time SUNY hikes its tuition, the level of state support declines.

“Students and their parents would wind up paying more and getting less,” Smith warned. “Equal access to the University would no longer be possible, because tens of thousands of students would not be able to afford the higher tuition at some state campuses. Standardized tuition ensures equal access to all SUNY campuses.”

Smith fears that the advent of differential tuition would allow the state to walk away from its commitment to fund public higher education and place the burden on students

and their families. In a news interview, Smith told a reporter that a \$600 tuition hike would be necessary for SUNY to make up for the loss of the projected \$118 million budget cut.

Advocating for change

UUP’s president will take the union’s budgetary concerns directly to lawmakers when he testifies before a legislative budget hearing Jan. 27 in Albany. On Jan. 26, several dozen UUP members from across the state will descend on Albany for the union’s first advocacy day of this year. They will personally ask legislators to address SUNY’s urgent funding needs.

Members don’t have to leave their campuses to help in this time of urgent need. The UUP Web site will shortly have letters members can fax to their state lawmakers, urging them to reject the governor’s proposed budget and eliminate the budget cut targeting the University.

SAVE THESE DATES!

JANUARY		
Jan. 26	UUP Advocacy Day	Albany
FEBRUARY		
Feb. 2	UUP Advocacy Day*	Albany
Feb. 4	UUP Executive Board meeting	Albany
Feb. 5-6	2010 Winter DA	Albany
Feb. 9	UUP Advocacy Day*	Albany
Feb. 12-14	Black & Puerto Rican Caucus	Albany
Feb. 23	UUP Advocacy Day*	Albany
MARCH		
March 2	NYSUT Higher Ed Lobby Day	Albany
March 9	UUP Advocacy Day*	Albany

* Tentative dates—please check the UUP Web site for possible changes.

NOTE: The links to the full articles bring you to a page on the publication's Web site. While every effort is made to ensure these links are still active, the publication may cancel or change these links without notice.

The New York Times —Jan. 18

Professor is a label that leans to the left

This article examines the issue of why most college faculty often tend to be liberal:

The overwhelmingly liberal tilt of university professors has been explained by everything from outright bias to higher I.Q. scores. Now new research suggests that critics may have been asking the wrong question. Instead of looking at why most professors are liberal, they should ask why so many liberals — and so few conservatives — want to be professors.

A pair of sociologists think they may have an answer: typecasting. Conjure up the classic image of a humanities or social sciences professor, the fields where the imbalance is greatest: tweed jacket, pipe, nerdy, long-winded, secular — and liberal. Even though that may be an outdated stereotype, it influences younger people's ideas about what they want to be when they grow up.

Full story available at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/18/arts/18liberal.html?scp=2&sq=patricia%20cohen&st=cse>

theithacajournal —Jan. 17

Paterson unveils higher education reform plan

UUP President Phil Smith expresses reservations about the governor's plan to give SUNY campuses sweeping new powers, including the right to raise tuition without legislative approval:

Phil Smith, president of United University Professions, said the union, which represents SUNY's professors, supports some of Paterson's plan, including the elimination of prior approval for contracts, but is wary of giving individual schools too much power.

"One area that we are concerned about is the ability of SUNY to lease campus lands," he said. "These lands don't actually belong to SUNY, they belong to the taxpayers of New York state."

Full story available at:

<http://www.theithacajournal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=20101170369>

THE BUFFALO NEWS —Jan. 16

Paterson to unveil SUNY reforms

As proponents hail the governor's plan, the leader of the Assembly Higher Education Committee registers her opposition:

Opponents, like Assemblywoman Deborah Glick, a Manhattan Democrat, fear lower- and middle-income families would be squeezed out of a college education.

"I have always been concerned the proposal for either automatic increases or different tuition will undermine what I believe is the mission of public education, which is to provide access to higher education for those who are unable to afford the private system," said Glick, chair of the Assembly's Higher Education Committee.

"If anything," Glick said, "the need for more access to higher education has never been more important."

Full story available at:

<http://www.buffalonews.com/home/story/924345.html>

Newsday —Jan. 15

5 local colleges brace for budget cuts

Officials at Long Island's public colleges predict a series of adverse effects from the Executive Budget days before it was officially unveiled:

Long Island's five public colleges are bracing for state budget cuts that will likely increase class sizes, lengthen lines for registration and other services, and scuttle plans to offer new programs.

As they await Gov. David A. Paterson's new budget, several of the schools fear that they will have to cancel courses and turn away qualified students.

Paterson's announcement Friday that schools could have greater financial autonomy in the future doesn't affect this year's budget woes.

Anxieties about this year's cuts come even as SUNY's Stony Brook, Old Westbury and Farmingdale campuses are attracting a record number of applicants while the Island's two community colleges burst with students from morning till night.

Full story available via paid subscription at:

<http://www.newsday.com/long-island/5-local-public-colleges-brace-for-state-budget-cuts-1.1704909>

Newsday —Jan. 15

Paterson's SUNY plan could clear way for tuition hikes

Gov. Paterson's plan to allow SUNY schools to charge differential tuition could pave the way for students to be paying much more:

Paterson's plan would allow all SUNY and CUNY campuses to raise their tuition. Major research campuses, including Stony Brook, Binghamton and Albany, will be able to charge more than smaller colleges of the State University of New York.

Paterson's plan needs to be approved by the state Legislature, where several Democrats and Republicans already have raised objections.

Based on Paterson's proposal and families' ability to pay, Stony Brook's \$5,000 annual tuition could go up as much as 6 percent a year, said Dr. Samuel L. Stanley Jr., president of the university, in an interview. The extra money would allow the school to add 400 faculty members in the next 10 years, he said.

Full story available via paid subscription at:

<http://www.newsday.com/news/paterson-s-suny-plan-could-clear-way-for-tuition-hikes-1.1704074>

The New York Times —Jan. 14

Binghamton president announces retirement

Lois DeFleur is stepping down after serving as president of SUNY Binghamton for 19 years:

Lois DeFleur announced her resignation Wednesday as president of Binghamton University. DeFleur said in an e-mail message to the faculty that she was leaving in July because of her mother's fragile health and her plans to be married.

Full story available at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/14/nyregion/14binghamton.html?scp=1&sq=Lois%20DeFleur&st=cse>