

Delegates do their duty at the winter DA in Albany

In his State of the Union address at last month's Winter DA in Albany, President Bill Scheuerman vowed that the union would tackle the challenges that lie ahead — from threats to privatize the SUNY hospitals, to the SUNY budget, to contract talks with the state.

"As veterans, we've learned a few things over the years, including how to turn threats and challenges into opportunities that make UUP a stronger union," he said.

Scheuerman noted that UUP has made it clear to lawmakers — in letters, at rallies and in testimony around the state — that its members oppose the Berger Commission recommendations to privatize the SUNY hospitals.

"Privatization of the hospitals would undercut health care services to large segments of the state's indigent and uninsured population," Scheuerman said. "We simply can't let this happen. We have no choice but to fight this one to the finish."

Delegates joined the fray by availing themselves of the union's mobile political action center, where they used e-mail to fax hundreds of letters to lawmakers and the governor. Delegates also voted to amend the union's annual spending plan to provide the money necessary to fight the Berger Commission report.

NYSUT Executive VP Alan Lubin in his keynote address pledged NYSUT's support in the fight to defeat the commission's recommendations.

"I predict we're going to win this one because



Photo by Karen L. Mattison

DA delegates send faxes to elected leaders, urging them to reject efforts to privatize the SUNY hospitals. Helping his colleagues at the union's mobile political action center is Charlie McAteer of Stony Brook HSC, standing. Sending computer faxes are Nick Koridis of Stony Brook, Angelin Allen of Brooklyn HSC, center, and Carol Braund of Upstate Medical University.

we have a mission," Lubin said. "This fight will not go away until we win it. NYSUT will not run away from this one."

Meanwhile, Scheuerman and Lubin agree that the governor's first budget proposal is a good first step for public education. However, both worry

that a projected budget deficit of \$2.5 billion and the governor's plan to cut taxes by \$6 billion over the next few years could put SUNY, CUNY and the community colleges at risk.

Despite these obstacles, UUP looks to capitalize on the governor's promise to make New York's public higher ed institutions the best in the country. The union is pressing for additional funding for new full-time faculty, which is the cornerstone of the union's annual ad campaign. Delegates previewed the 30-second TV spot, which stresses how SUNY is vital to the state's economic recovery.

Also during the two-day convention, delegates attended meetings, listened to committee reports, adopted resolutions and amended the union's constitution.

The constitutional amendment updates the charge of the union's Part-time Concerns Committee to draft proposals "to ensure fairness and equity of part-time academics and professionals throughout SUNY and in the activities and policies of UUP and its affiliates."

Delegates OK'd a resolution asking UUP to work with its affiliates, the Coalition of Labor Union Women and the National Organization for Women, in continued support of the civil lawsuit filed against Wal-Mart. The suit alleges that Wal-Mart is guilty of systemic sex discrimination in its U.S. stores.

Delegates backed a separate resolution that seeks to safeguard employees involved in cultural exchanges, development agreements and other joint ventures in China.

The U.S. Embassy in China has reported that incidents involving intimidation, life-threatening violence and indecent working conditions affecting foreign teachers have increased eight-fold since 2004, up to two a week on average as of August 2006.

The resolution asks UUP to communicate to federal lawmakers and the U.S. departments of State and Labor the importance of U.S. consulates in China in assisting and protecting American citizens who live abroad.

Reminders/Upcoming meetings

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| <p>FEB 26-27 —NYSUT Higher Ed Lobby Day</p> <p>MAR 1 —Deadline for the UUP 2006-2007 journalism competition</p> <p>MAR 6 —Univ. Center/HSC/Optometry Advocacy Day and Stony Brook Day, Albany</p> <p>MAR 9-10 —Chapter President Retreat, New Paltz</p> <p>MAR 13 —Librarian/Part-Timer/Univ. College/EOP/EOC Advocacy Day, Albany</p> | <p>MAR 19-20 —NYSUT Committee of 100, Albany</p> <p>MAR 27 —Retiree/NYSTI Advocacy Day, Albany</p> <p>MAR 29-31 —AFT Higher Education Conference, Portland, Ore.</p> <p>APR 13-14 —Spring Leadership Workshops, Cooperstown</p> <p>APR 26-28 —2007 NYSUT RA, Washington, D.C.</p> |
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(excerpts of selected newsclips)

The Legislative Gazette —Feb. 20

Higher Ed advocates seek more funding

Advocates for public higher education and independent colleges thanked Gov. Eliot Spitzer for listening to their needs, but asked the Legislature earlier this month to build upon the proposals to make up for years of what they consider to be a chronic under funding.

Spitzer proposed that the State University of New York be allocated \$143 million, but according to SUNY Chancellor John Ryan, the university requested \$116 million in base costs, and an additional \$123 million for new initiatives, which were not met by the executive's proposed budget.

"Gov. Spitzer's 2007-2008 Executive Budget proposal provides the state university with financial stability for the upcoming fiscal year, "but significantly less than requested by the University," Ryan said.

City University of New York Chancellor Matthew Goldstein reiterated Ryan's remarks by saying that CUNY, for which \$71 million was proposed, is also in need of additional funding, which the Legislature can provide.

"While we view the governor's overall recommendations as welcome and significant progress toward enhancing the state's investment in CUNY, the fact is that the University needs \$24 million more," Goldstein said. "That investment can no longer wait; we must do it now!"

Although the Executive Budget proposed by Spitzer dedicates the largest chunk of funding for public higher education in a decade, without cuts to any financial aid or tuition increases, the budget does not take into consideration money needed to expand and create new projects, according to SUNY and CUNY.

"As our institutions prepare these young men and women for entry into today's knowledge-based economy, it is critically important that the university have the resources to help meet the societal needs," said Ryan.

Advocates for SUNY and CUNY said they not only need to prepare for development projects, but for the increased enrollment as well. Last year, SUNY's enrollment increased by almost 6,000 students, and next year, it is expected to increase by 5,600, said Ryan.

Also, CUNY has reached its highest level in about three decades. In order to ensure that all students are given an equal opportunity to attend these public universities, there must be the funding to support them without having to immensely increase tuition, according to SUNY and CUNY.

Accommodating a major influx of students means that the universities must also have more full-time staff, according to Ryan and Goldstein. Many groups have called on the Legislature to devote more money to hiring full-time faculty members instead of exhausting their part-time faculty.

"Because of long-term insufficient funding for enrollment growth and ongoing structural deficits, SUNY administrators cut full-time faculty," said William E. Scheuerman, president of United University Professions. "The lack of sufficient faculty threatens institutional quality and access. That's no way to run a University."

Over the past 10 years, adjunct faculty at SUNY have grown to 3,000 and at CUNY to 2,000, but full-time faculty at SUNY have only increased by roughly 200 and at CUNY by 70, according to the New York State Public Higher Education Conference Board.

A major change that could take effect during the next fiscal year is the expansion of the Tuition Assistance Program.

The Senate proposed to raise the minimum TAP award from \$500 to \$1,000 and to increase dependent students' income eligibility cap from \$80,000 to \$100,000 net taxable income. This proposal was welcomed by many organizations, such as the New York Public Interest Research Group and The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, but both said more reforms still need to be brought to part-time TAP.

"Providing funding for part-time TAP allows the program to meet a broader spectrum of student circumstances," said John Mascher, chairman of the board of directors of NYPIRG.

According to the Schuyler Center, working independent students need as much money as possible in order to receive an education and for many, TAP is the only solution to burdensome tuition costs.

The Daily Star —Feb. 13

SUNY Delhi leads state in application gains

The State University College of Technology at Delhi is leading the SUNY system in terms of application growth, the school's dean of enrollment said Monday.

At last count, SUNY Delhi had received 3,162 applications, up from 2,306 in 2006, said Dean of Enrollment Services Craig Wesley.

"It's word-of-mouth advertising," Wesley said. "I think the best recruitment tool is a satisfied student."

Systemwide, the State University of New York's university centers, such as Binghamton University, are up 7.6% in terms of applications; colleges, such as the State University College at Oneonta, are up 8.9%, Wesley said.

Although other colleges of technology are up 17%, SUNY Delhi's increase is nearly 40%, Wesley said.

"Quite frankly, I'm very pleased with this growth," said Wesley, who took over as dean of enrollment in January 2006.

Wesley said student satisfaction with the college is reflected in an opinion survey conducted every three years.

The results of the latest survey show Delhi among the top 10 colleges in the SUNY system

in 13 categories, he said.

The highest rankings were in areas such as academic advising, tutoring services and availability of internships.

Some of the biggest jumps in applications came from the New York City area, Wesley said.

Applications are up 23% in the Bronx, 59% in Brooklyn, 32% in Suffolk County and 24% in Westchester County, he said.

SUNY Delhi has historically been one of the more diverse campuses in the SUNY system, Wesley said.

"Much of our success in recruiting students of color in the boroughs is part of an evolutionary process," Wesley said. "At the same time, we recognized that there was untapped potential in the metropolitan area. In response, we increased the number of visits to New York City area high schools, college nights and college fairs.

"Preliminary results seem to indicate that the effort has generated incremental applications," Wesley said. "We also implemented some highly targeted direct-mail campaigns. Again, we think we see some positive results."

Applications are also up 39% in Delaware County and 36% in Otsego County.

But more applications doesn't mean more students.

Under guidelines set by SUNY, the college is budgeted for a 3% increase in enrollment in the 2007-2008 academic year.

"That's the growth that we had approved by SUNY," Wesley said.

SUNY Delhi uses a system of rolling admissions, which allows the school to accept students as they apply, Wesley said.

Those who apply later this year may find themselves without an option.

TIMES UNION —Feb. 9

SUNY chancellor: Budget good, could be better

State University of New York Chancellor John Ryan called Gov. Eliot Spitzer's Executive Budget the strongest out-of-the-gates spending plan for higher education in over a decade.

Then he asked legislators for about \$100 million more.

"While one might look at this budget and think the University is in good financial shape going into budget negotiations, we hope this is only the beginning of the discussion," Ryan testified at a joint hearing of the Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means committees.

Spitzer proposed \$3.36 billion for SUNY's 2007-08 gross operating budget, an increase of \$148.1 million, or 4.6%.

In his testimony, Ryan sought more money to hire full-time faculty, recruit researchers and establish a new Office of Diversity and Educational Equity.