



UNITED UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONS

Testimony on the 2016-17 Executive Budget

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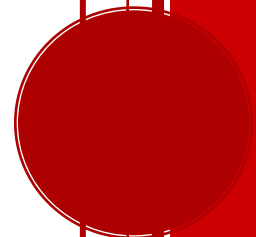
Senator Catharine Young, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
and

Assemblyman Herman D. Farrell Jr., Chair
Assembly Ways and Means Committee

February 8, 2016

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Chairwoman Young, Chairman Farrell, distinguished members of the Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means Committees, thank you for providing United University Professions (UUP) with the opportunity to testify today on the SFY 2016-17 Executive Budget for higher education.

I am UUP President Frederick E. Kowal. UUP is the nation's largest higher education union, representing more than 35,000 academic and professional faculty and staff. Our members serve hundreds of thousands of students and patients at State University of New York (SUNY) academic institutions, health sciences centers and public teaching hospitals administered directly by SUNY.

First, I'd like to thank you for your strong, bipartisan advocacy of a policy that commits the state to fully fund the base budget needs of our public universities, including our vital teaching hospitals. In particular, I would like to thank Assemblymember Glick and Senator LaValle for your leadership and recognition that the definition must be fixed. Although the governor didn't approve it, your overwhelming passage of the Maintenance of Effort legislation last year (S.281-A/A.5370-A) gives hope that a fairer level of predictable state support can be negotiated as part of the 2017 Executive Budget, a door left open in the governor's veto message.

State support for SUNY state-operated campuses has plummeted from \$1.32 billion in 2007 to \$950 million this year. In that time, revenue from student tuition and fees has skyrocketed from \$915 million to \$1.71 billion. The promise of the 2011 NYSUNY 2020 legislation—to use rational tuition increases to enhance educational programs—hasn't been kept. Instead, tuition has been used to offset shortfalls in state funding, most notably to pay for the mandatory, day-to-day operating costs of campuses, such as utilities, building maintenance, and collective bargaining obligations.

The Executive Budget again proposes essentially flat state support for SUNY and fails to include funds necessary to assure maintenance of effort for Fiscal Year 2016-17. UUP supports SUNY's request for \$47.3 million in additional base funding for the state-operated campuses. This is necessary to cover collective bargaining obligations, including repayment of Deficit Reduction Program monies withheld from paychecks in 2013-14 and 2014-15 and contractual salary increases for 2016-17. An

additional \$8.2 million is necessary to cover mandatory costs for utilities and building maintenance.

A true maintenance of effort should also cover the SUNY hospitals. To address this concern, UUP supports restoring the state operating subsidy for the hospitals to prior levels. We also encourage support for SUNY's budget request to forgive \$40 million in debt service. This loan forgiveness would free crucial funding for mandatory operational support.

NYSUNY 2020

The expiration this year of the 2011 "Rational Tuition" law provides the Executive and the Legislature with a crucial opportunity—to design a long-term plan to ensure that all campuses have sufficient resources to meet our shared aspirations for SUNY to provide its current and future students an accessible, affordable, and excellent education. Such a plan cannot continue to rely on continuously spiraling tuition increases in the absence of adequate state support for higher education.

Students now support 64 percent of SUNY's operating budget through tuition and fees, while the state contributes the remaining 36 percent. Not only are students paying a higher price for their education and incurring increasingly unsustainable student loan burdens, they are faced with increased class sizes, limited course availability, and cuts in advisement and mentoring services—all contributing to delayed graduation. Others, though talented, are from disadvantaged circumstances and are simply shut out because they can't afford increased tuition costs.

Continuing this trend will jeopardize the promise of NYSUNY 2020 and threaten the quality and availability of public higher education in New York state. Any long-term plan must include state support sufficient to assure full maintenance of effort and a continuing commitment to providing a high-quality education to New York state students without further shifting the costs of that education onto their backs. It is our responsibility to do so. The mission of SUNY is to provide an accessible, affordable, quality education to New York students.

We must also commit to increase the proportion of full-time faculty to 70 percent. Why? Because full-time faculty can devote far more time to the student advisement and out-of-class interaction with students that's absolutely essential to improving completion rates, especially for low income students, students of color and first generation students. Let's stop scuffling along and settling for stop-gap fixes to long-term challenges and opportunities.

UUP calls on the governor and Legislature to create the “Excelsior Excellence Fund.” Creating this endowment could provide the long term and growing resources to rebuild SUNY and CUNY academic departments depleted by historic underfunding, support transition of accomplished part-time faculty and staff to full-time positions, and provide crucial intellectual investment to attract and grow new and emerging businesses.

PERFORMANCE-BASED FUNDING

The Executive Budget continues to set aside \$18 million of SUNY state operating aid for performance based funding for FY 2016-17. This would continue the level of this year’s performance-based funding allocation. However, what’s left unstated in the Executive Budget is that, in addition to the original \$18 million, SUNY diverted an additional \$82 million from other funding sources to support performance-based funding this year.

The governor’s performance-based funding proposal is a market-based accountability scheme that only serves to further avoid adequately funding public higher education. We take issue with this proposal on many fronts. There is a real disconnect between New York state’s chronic underfunding of our public higher education system and its expectations of high performance. Performance-based funding is not the way to undo years of disinvestment that undermined the ability of SUNY campuses to achieve the very goals this proposal aims to achieve. Given the lack of resources and the reality of our underfunded university system, we are concerned that continuing performance-based funding will serve to erode campus autonomy and diminish control over academic programs and curricula. Colleges in other states have experienced these negatives after the implementation of performance-based funding.

In fact, the Policy Studies Journal's 2011 Yearbook contains a review of the research on performance funding. The research concluded that the accountability movement, in terms of performance-funding policies, has largely failed to achieve any real improvement in student outcomes. For example, Washington State saw no benefit from implementing a performance-based funding system for its community colleges. In its January 2015 study, the American Educational Research Association reported that Washington’s community colleges showed no “systematic increase in student retention or production of associate degrees.”

Another recent analysis, performed by the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, found that performance funding was generally a failure, with sometimes negative effects. The September 2014 report studied more

than 500 public universities in all 50 states during an 18-year span for the “effectiveness of performance funding policies as a mechanism for improving student graduation, persistence, and degree attainment.” Their findings stated that “current performance funding policies are not associated with higher levels of student performance and that these policies may contribute to lower performance over a longer period of time.”

The same study noted that many of the universities may fail to improve performance because they lack adequate resources to make those achievements possible. Findings from this study show that student outcomes are related to “student profiles, institutional characteristics, and state environments, but are not enhanced by performance funding policies.” In short, results show that these policies are ineffective at best. At worst, they have negative effects on student performance. In addition, performance-based metrics that focus on student completion within prescribed time frames may lead campuses to admit more students with profiles that make them a better bet for quick completion rather than students with less privileged backgrounds. This would negatively impact accessibility and diversity.

The goals of graduating more students, improving student success and getting graduates into the workforce—all goals shared by UUP—will not be met through performance-based funding. It doesn't work. It's not the answer.

OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS

I would like to express our gratitude for your steadfast support of our highly successful opportunity programs, which have transformed the lives of thousands of New Yorkers who otherwise would never have been able to pursue their dreams.

The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) is an outstanding example of a proper use of state funding for SUNY. Through the utilization of specialized advisement, counseling, tutorial services, and summer programs, students in the EOP programs graduate at higher rates than the general population of SUNY's graduating classes. This is despite the fact that students at a typical EOP program—Stony Brook University—enter the program coming from families with average family incomes below \$20,000 and with SAT scores that are, on average, 300 points below the mean SAT score for first-year students. With the support of EOP, students coming from the most economically disadvantaged areas of New York, often underprepared for college work, become successful students, graduates, and economically productive New Yorkers. The current EOP graduation rate exceeds 65

percent, which is above the national average for public institutions. A third of our state-operated campuses have EOP graduation rates in the 70 to 88 percent range. Last year, SUNY received 30,000 applications for 2,500 available EOP seats. Clearly, this program is crucial to providing higher education access to disadvantaged students across New York state.

Similarly, the Educational Opportunity Centers (EOCs) provide college preparatory education and vocational training to economically disadvantaged New York State residents who are unprepared for college-level study and vocationally unprepared for employment. Their work supports the statutory mission of SUNY to provide the "broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population". The EOCs play a crucial role in addressing the growing need to provide educational pathways to adult learners, disengaged youth, and those for whom English is not the native language.

The Executive Budget maintains support for these crucial programs. However, there is clearly unmet demand. UUP supports increasing state support for these programs and proposes that \$15 million be added to current funding to support their expansion.

CLEAN ENERGY

We applaud the governor for proposing the \$15 million Clean Energy Opportunity Program for SUNY. This proposal would help SUNY meet the burgeoning green economy demand for sustainability education, job training and certification programs. The funding would be used to hire new faculty to infuse sustainability skills and standards across relevant curricular areas, as well as develop new academic programs. It would also be used to purchase equipment in these academic programs. The governor is right in promising to lead New York to the forefront of the green-tech economy. The stakes for creating the future hubs of this innovation economy are enormous.

For instance, the job and economic potential for offshore wind energy in New York is extraordinary. New York is blessed with a tremendous untapped offshore wind resource that could catapult it to national leadership in renewable energy. According to a November 2014 study by Stony Brook University's Energy Policy Institute, a Long Island offshore wind power industry scaled at 2,500 megawatts would support 58,000 FTE jobs and approximately \$12.96 billion in economic output. Let's seize our future and invest in SUNY's capacity to meet the educational needs of a thriving, green and sustainable economy, while also confronting the scourge of

climate change that threatens the well-being of New York's human and natural communities.

HEALTH SCIENCE CENTERS & HOSPITALS

Health care is a main pillar of New York's economy. According to the New York State Department of Labor, health care led New York in job gains in 2015, especially in ambulatory care services—which increased by 32,000 jobs. SUNY's network of health science centers and teaching hospitals educate the lion's share of in-state physicians and a large percentage of allied health care professionals. SUNY's three teaching hospitals—Upstate, Downstate and Stony Brook—are economic engines in their communities, provide essential health care services, especially to low-income and underserved communities, and supply the current and future work force for this crucial industry. Moreover, SUNY's four academic medical centers generate approximately \$700 million of the state's \$2 billion in federal Graduate Medical Education funding, which represents 10 percent of the entire federal allocation.

It is absolutely senseless for the state to starve the very institutions that undergird a dominant and **growing** part of New York's high-wage economy. The Executive Budget cuts \$18 million for the hospital subsidy that the Legislature restored last year. We call on the Legislature to restore the hospital subsidy to its 2008 level of \$128 million. The appropriation was always intended to compensate SUNY hospitals for being the only state entities forced to absorb debt service and fringe benefits payments. According to SUNY's 2016-17 budget request, the gap between state support and these costs exceeds \$200 million. I ask that you bring an end to this invidious treatment of SUNY's teaching hospitals and properly support their vital public mission.

SUNY's public hospitals and health sciences centers provide life-saving health care to thousands of patients each day. These facilities provide an invaluable service to the community and residents; they conduct research impacting health care services and delivery, and train physicians and other health care professionals while providing vital health care. Health care professionals trained in these facilities tend to stay in the state—and most often in the communities they trained in. Our hospitals provide care to all patients, oftentimes those with little or no medical insurance. New York must do its part to ensure that SUNY's teaching hospitals are supported and thrive.

SUNY DOWNSTATE

I want to thank you for protecting SUNY Downstate's public mission of education, service to the community, and research from misguided privatization schemes. However, to secure SUNY Downstate's future, we need to meet the challenge of better serving the dire health care needs of the underserved residents in Central and Northern Brooklyn. We must also confront the challenge of providing high-quality medical training to Brooklyn's future health care workforce in a rapidly transforming health care system that is shifting resources to preventative care in outpatient settings. According to SUNY Downstate's website, more New York City physicians have trained at Downstate than at any other medical school; in some specialties, they trained more than half of the borough's physicians.

Over the past couple of months, our members at SUNY Downstate have heard rumors of a potential merger/affiliation with Kings County Hospital. These rumors are disconcerting. Kings County Hospital, as part of the Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC), is in a compromised financial position. In light of the HHC's bleak financial outlook, its facilities are not in position to serve as a lead agency in a merger/affiliation. We ask you to speak against such a proposal. We continue to seek a solution to SUNY Downstate that would preserve the facility as a public teaching hospital that provides life-saving services to hundreds of thousands of patients each year.

We seek your support for a Brooklyn Health Care plan that dedicates a portion of the \$1.2 billion Health Care Refinancing Program to develop four SUNY Downstate owned-and-operated ambulatory care centers. These satellite centers would support medical education and community wellness and allow SUNY Downstate to continue as a state-operated public hospital providing vital health care services to thousands of underinsured and uninsured patients in Brooklyn. In collaboration with other Brooklyn safety net hospitals, our plan calls for development of comprehensive ambulatory care throughout the underinsured areas in the borough.

BUFFALO HEALTH CARE TEACHING FELLOWS

SUNY Buffalo's Health Science Center has the difficult challenge of providing high-quality medical training for its residents without having its own clinical hospital. The proposed Buffalo Health Care Teaching Fellows program would provide the focused and time-intensive teaching and guidance that residents need to receive the breadth and depth of experience that residencies should provide. It would also

provide the accountability and continuity needed to ensure high-quality medical education.

This program would convert Academic Scholars (which are not paid by SUNY and are not directly connected to the medical school or its curriculum) to Teaching Health Care Fellows. The Teaching Health Care Fellow designation would be a permanent SUNY employee position; a clinical track would be developed for advancement and recognition. The fellows would also be permitted to devote up to 20 percent of their work time for clinical practice. The cap on clinical practice income would remove the distraction of demanding patient delivery responsibilities currently necessary to generate (through “clinical income”) their positions and support. Instead, the Teaching Fellows would be freed to focus on training residents in the skills they will need to provide high quality care, primarily in outpatient settings.

TEACHER EDUCATION

Enrollments in many public school districts are growing again, particularly in urban and suburban high-needs districts serving diverse and minority students. In fact, 265 school districts are experiencing a combined enrollment growth of nearly 20,000 in 2015-16, including districts in New York City, Buffalo, Utica, Hempstead, Roosevelt and Central Islip. At the same time, the number of new prospective teachers is declining dramatically. Misguided initiatives to impose multiple, poorly designed and costly high-stakes teacher certification exams, combined with punitive and unfair teacher evaluations and receivership mandates, have discouraged large numbers of young adults from pursuing teaching careers.

Enrollments in the state’s public and private teacher education programs fell by nearly 40 percent, from 79,225 in 2008-09 to 47,872 in 2012-13. Serious teacher shortages are already apparent in areas such as special education, technology education, early childhood education, and in STEM fields. Severe substitute teacher shortages across the state further reflect the shrinkage of the teacher candidate pipeline in recent years.

Let me highlight just one example. SUNY’s Buffalo State and Oswego campuses have been primary institutions preparing Technology Education teachers in the state. In 2008, their combined Technology Education undergraduate enrollment was in the range of 350 students. Today, it is fewer than 50. In a multi-campus forum held with Regents in November 2015, a faculty member reported that over the past year, SUNY placed 20 new technology education teachers in the state, but received more than 100 requests from schools needing technology education teachers. These

programs expect to graduate fewer than 20 students this year and anticipate that there will be 75-80 schools that need qualified technology education teachers but will be unable to find one. While our campuses are attracting students interested in engineering and other technology careers, there has been a dramatic decline in students who are interested in pursuing a teaching career in their field.

The declining recruitment of future teachers has exacerbated an already growing diversity problem. According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center, the majority of children in New York state under five years of age are non-white (54 percent). In contrast, there are proportionately more white individuals and fewer people of color enrolled in teacher education programs. The most recent Title II data, covering Academic Years 2011-12 and 2012-13, reveal that 70 percent of students in New York state teacher education programs are white.

A 2015 Albert Shanker Institute report, titled "The State of Teacher Diversity in American Education," analyzed teacher diversity in nine U.S. cities, including New York City. In 2012 "White teachers in New York City public schools outnumbered their black and Hispanic colleagues by roughly a 3-1 ratio, according to the report. The situation was reversed among public school students, where blacks and Hispanics outnumbered whites by a 5-1 ratio. Between 2002 and 2012, the share of white and Hispanic teachers in district schools remained stable, while the proportion of black teachers declined.

Recruitment of an adequate and diverse pool of new teachers in the state has suffered a further setback due to obstacles associated with the 2014 implementation of a new system of teacher certification. Teacher candidates must pass four high-stakes tests to obtain initial teaching certification. The new exams, administered by Pearson, Inc., have not gone through adequate validity and reliability tests and were not properly field tested. There is no conclusive proof that this new certification process is improving teacher preparedness in New York state, and there is no plan to formally evaluate their impact on the field. There are serious content problems with some of the new exams, and student certification costs have risen substantially. Instead of improving teacher quality, this new package of certification requirements is presenting unprecedented roadblocks to initial teaching certification and further setting back efforts to recruit new teachers and diversify the teaching workforce. Teacher candidates can pay up to \$1,000 to take—and often retake—exams that have not been adequately vetted, receiving inadequate feedback from Pearson when they fail their tests.

The significance of the new certification requirements as a factor in New York state's declining recruitment of new potential teachers is illustrated by student experience with the edTPA – the new performance assessment that must be

completed during the student teaching experience. The current mismatch between edTPA requirements and student teaching conditions, particularly acute in fields such as special education, has set many student teachers up for failure. A growing number of teacher candidates who successfully complete teacher education programs and are recommended for certification by their faculty, are deciding not to pursue certification in the state. The edTPA must be completed during student teaching and submitted to Pearson for scoring within an 18-month time frame. Faculty reports of low rates of student registration for and submission of the edTPA for scoring reveal that many teacher candidates are giving up on the possibility of teaching in the state. Students who fail to timely submit the edTPA are, for the most part, eliminating the possibility of getting certified in New York state.

Out-of-state schools are well aware of the teacher certification debacle in New York and are aggressively recruiting teacher candidates from our teacher education programs. There has been a steady increase in out-of-state recruiters at Teacher Recruitment Day events, where prospective employers come to campuses to interview program graduates. For example, Central New York teacher recruitment days, which involve 17 public and private colleges from the Southern Tier (Elmira and Binghamton) through the North Country (St. Lawrence and Potsdam), have seen a steady increase in participation by out-of-state districts (from 22 in 2012 to 27 in 2013, to 38 in 2014, and 48 in 2015).

UUP has demonstrated a strong, unwavering commitment to high-quality teacher education programs. Our members are directly involved in teaching required courses and providing support services for students in those programs. Our work includes supervising student teachers, arranging student teacher placements and other experiential learning activities with P-12 colleagues, collecting and reporting program and student outcomes data, and preparing assessments for internal evaluation and external assessment. Tapping the expertise of our members across teacher education programs on 17 SUNY campuses, we have developed teacher education proposals to enhance the quality of teacher education and begin to remove barriers to entering the teaching profession in New York state.

In its draft report of findings and recommendations, SUNY's TeachNY Advisory Council recommended that campuses should "work more effectively with current on-campus programs, such as SUNY's own highly successful EOP." UUP agrees. To meet the challenge, UUP proposes that the state provide \$15 million to support a new pilot opportunity program—Recruiting and Educating Teachers for All (RETA)—to address the worsening crisis of recruiting and retaining teachers in our under-resourced high-needs districts, and increase the participation rate of under-represented and economically disadvantaged individuals in teaching careers.

This program would provide: (1) financial resources and direct faculty and advisor support to assist students in preparing for and successfully completing teacher certification requirements; (2) supportive services designed to help students who need assistance in academic, career and personal counseling as well as tutoring and supplemental instruction; (3) financial assistance for non-tuition-related expenses (exam and other fees, books and supplies, transportation costs for required completion of 100 hours of field work and distant student teaching placements).

RETA incorporates several of the Albert Shanker Institute's policy recommendations for increasing diversity in teaching. Four warrant particular attention. First, modeled after SUNY's highly successful Educational Opportunity Program, RETA meets the need to develop and expand "programs with evidence of helping to recruit, mentor, and support minority teachers." Second, RETA "invests in and supports high-quality teacher education programs at public colleges and universities serving large numbers of minority students" through its investment in SUNY's teacher education programs, which provide access to students at 17 state-operated campuses around the state. Third, RETA supports collaboration between college/university programs and P-12 schools through the development of orientation programs that would introduce prospective teacher education students to the field of teaching. It would facilitate partnerships between SUNY teacher education programs and school districts in need of diverse teachers. Fourth, RETA will enable "adequate mentoring, support and training in culturally responsive practices to novice teachers—of all races and ethnicities."

As an important step toward addressing the flawed and poorly implemented new system of teacher certification exams and its negative impact on recruiting and retaining teacher candidates in New York state, UUP also calls on the state to stop outsourcing the quality control and accountability for tests to for-profit vendors such as Pearson. The state currently, without cost, can contract with educational vendors to develop and score tests. The vendor profits directly from students, who pay to take and retake tests. The vendor is paid regardless of the accuracy, validity or fairness of the tests, and profits from faulty exams that often require student retakes. We propose a change in the state's procurement law that would require SED to take back responsibility for exam administration and fee collection. This would be an important step toward ending the private exploitation of prospective teacher candidates.

UUP also proposes that immediate steps be taken to address pressing problems with the four high-stakes certification requirements. Since 2014 students have paid to take and retake what are clearly faulty teacher certification exams, with

their initial teaching certification held hostage by a rushed and poorly designed transition to new certification requirements.

An important first step would be to remove the edTPA as a high-stakes requirement to allow the necessary time to develop appropriate ways to implement high-quality performance assessment across all 27 different teacher education specialty areas. New York is one of very few states that decided to use the edTPA for high-stakes purposes, and was the only state to do so without adequate trials. Exploratory use for a period of time would help to determine the best way to use edTPA and to solve problems that have not been addressed. These include the mismatch between the edTPA and specific student teaching contexts, parental concerns about the security of mandatory classroom videos, and the transformation of the student teaching experience from a rich clinical experience to “student teaching to the test.” Another part of this proposal is to give campuses the option to use alternative performance assessments that may be better suited to specific programs and specialty areas, thereby enhancing the assessment of teacher candidates. New York state’s one-size-fits-all edTPA policy is not serving all teacher education programs and students optimally and is creating insurmountable barriers for many prospective teachers.

A second step toward addressing the flaws in the new certification process is a full analysis of the entire package of new teacher certification exams to determine whether they meet professional standards for content, validity, and reliability in all teaching specialty areas. The radical change in teacher certification imposed in 2014 must be evaluated. We are willing to work with the State Education Department, the Regents, legislators, and professionals across private and public teacher education programs to help put New York back on track for a high-quality teacher certification process.

SUPPORT FULL-TIME FACULTY AND TRANSITION PART-TIME FACULTY TO FULL TIME POSITIONS

UUP calls on the Legislature to support investment in full-time faculty as part of an Education Quality initiative. Our campuses have a crying need to strengthen their integrated academic and scholarship mission with the right balance of long-term tenure track faculty and adjunct faculty. Many of SUNY's adjuncts are highly qualified for and available to perform full time service to the university.

Tenure track faculty members are crucial to a campus's academic, service and research mission. They are responsible for continually renewing and creating curriculum and degree programs, complying with accreditation and assessment requirements, and ensuring that students are receiving state-of-the-art instruction connected to the latest development in content knowledge in order to be ready for our demanding information based work force. Having an adequate base of tenured faculty is crucial to a campus's academic governance as well as recruitment and development of new faculty. Tenured faculty provide the rich interactions with students, both in and out of class, that are crucial to degree completion, especially for disadvantaged students.

Tenured faculty provides the continuity, mentoring, tutoring, networking and advisement necessary for a quality education and successful transition to the work force. Tenured faculty members are the drivers of basic and applied research that advances the frontiers of knowledge and spurs the growth of existing and promising new industries.

Unfortunately, we are a long way from an appropriate ratio of full-time to part-time faculty. As of January, 2016, more than 10,000 SUNY academics (56%) are not eligible for tenure. More than 6,000 of them are part-time teaching faculty and more than 4,000 are full-time faculty not eligible for tenure. The latter include full-time teaching faculty across the campuses and clinical faculty at the medical schools and teaching hospitals.

We call on the Executive and Legislature to support a plan to phase in investment in full-time tenure track faculty to reach a goal of 70 percent that reflects the quality we should aspire to for all students.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Millions of dollars in public funds are spent each year by the SUNY and CUNY research foundations, yet they operate as "shadow agencies" shielded from public disclosure and accountability. SUNY's campus foundations have grown dramatically in recent years, performing more and more functions previously administered, operated, and staffed by state employees. UUP urges the Legislature to require these organizations to be more transparent and accountable in two important ways. First, campus foundation and SUNY Research Foundation employees should be held to the same financial disclosure requirements as SUNY's state employees. Second, these foundations should be required to issue annual reports that include information on all contracts for services and personnel, as well as reports that identify all foundation employees and the compensation they receive. As SUNY has

continued to expand reliance on its foundations, accountability and transparency should be required for all use of public funds.

PROTECT RETIREES

Recruitment and retention of a highly qualified work force in SUNY and other state agencies depends in part on providing security in retirement. Workers who devote years of hard work and dedication to state service make ongoing contributions to their agencies and communities long after they retire. We urge the Legislature to reject the following Executive Budget proposals to reduce the state's support for its retirees: tiering of state contributions to retiree health insurance premiums based on years of service, capping the state's reimbursement of Medicare Part B premiums, and ending state reimbursement of increased Medicare Part B costs for higher-income retirees under IRMAA. We also urge you to support the maintenance of a strong economic foundation for a high quality and productive life for New York state's retirees by raising the maximum earning allowance from \$30,000 to \$35,000.

CONCLUSION

As I stated at the beginning of my testimony, the sunset of NYSUNY 2020 gives us a timely opportunity to reflect on the strengths and unmet needs of the university and design a future plan that meets the needs of our current and future students and the communities they live in. Years of underinvestment have skewed the partnership between students and their families and state responsibility. UUP believes that access to quality academic and support programs shouldn't depend on students' zip codes or their family's bank accounts. The greatest engine of social progress and upward mobility is public higher education. Let's set as our initial goal the restoration of a 50-50 partnership between state and tuition support of SUNY, harnessed to the goal of building true academic excellence and access for all qualified students.

We seek the Legislature's support, along with that of the Executive, for our proposals. Our confidence is high that our program will improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers. Such a goal is one that our members embrace enthusiastically, committed as we are to the best possible future for our university and, most importantly, our students.