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## Invest in SUNY Educational Programs



*“The mission of the state university system shall be to provide to the people of New York educational services of the highest quality with the broadest possible access fully representative of all segments of the population.”<sup>1</sup>*

Over the last decade, state support for the State University of New York has declined so dramatically that it is no longer certain that SUNY can fulfill its mandated mission.

The time is now for a renewed state investment in SUNY’s state-operated campuses. To wait would further jeopardize the future of SUNY’s 200,000 students, and the hundreds of thousands who will follow in years to come.

<sup>1</sup>Section 351 of State Educational Law

# SUNY: STATE-OPERATED CAMPUSES

## THE PROBLEM

History shows that in times of fiscal crisis, SUNY's operating budget is the first to be cut and the last to recover.

- During the Great Recession, state cutbacks hit the University's state-operated campuses harder and more often than any other state department or function. SUNY's campuses have not recovered any of that loss—despite billions of state funds subsequently poured into other programs and initiatives.
- The impact of those cutbacks on campuses is indisputable. State support declined from \$1.36 billion annually in 2008 to \$676 million today. That's a reduction of \$684 million in annual state support—a **massive 50 percent cut to SUNY's operating budget**.
- This cut is **more than twice** the combined state aid to all of SUNY's comprehensive colleges and technology campuses in 2008.

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- The impact of these reductions on SUNY's undergraduate programs was particularly harsh and intensified by the state's yearly habit of failing to recognize the huge incremental cost of enrollment growth.
- In 1997, SUNY had more than 10,300 full-time faculty members for an enrollment of 185,000 students. After a prolonged period of intensive enrollment growth—even though it has now stabilized—SUNY has just 8,700 full-time faculty to instruct more than 220,000 students.
- SUNY would need to employ 1,900 additional full-time instructors just to accommodate the University's enrollment growth—plus another 1,600 to return to the faculty-student ratios of past years.

## PRIORITIES FOR 2017-2018

The state must reverse two decades of decline in state support for SUNY's state-operated campuses, and create a constructive environment for improved education equality and institutional oversight.

- Invest \$50 million to implement the first stage of a multiyear initiative to restore at least half of the state cuts to SUNY's undergraduate operating budgets during the Great Recession. Top priority should be given to the hard-hit programs at SUNY's comprehensive and technology campuses.

- Invest \$30 million in SUNY's operating budget for the first year of a five-year program to increase the number of full-time faculty by 1,500 positions (still 2,000 fewer than needed). The governor's Excelsior Scholarship free tuition program will require SUNY to add full-time faculty to meet the educational needs of the expected influx of new students.



- Although more than 5,600 SUNY teaching faculty work part-time, they cannot be expected to meet the needs of a growing student population. Transitioning qualified part-time faculty to full-time positions is necessary.
- Increase funding to the Educational Opportunity Centers to provide vocational training opportunities for more than 16,000 students. Restore a \$5.3 million reduction to the EOCs and a \$2 million cut to the Attain Labs in the 2017-18 Executive Budget and add resources necessary to further strengthen these programs.
- Restore the \$5 million 2017-18 Executive Budget reduction to SUNY's Educational Opportunity Programs, and add resources necessary to strengthen this program.
- Create pilot opportunity programs to recruit and support several hundred students from economically disadvantaged communities for entry into teacher education programs. The programs would increase diversity in New York's elementary and secondary teaching ranks.
- Enact legislation to increase transparency and improve external and SUNY administrative oversight at the SUNY Research Foundation and the University's campus-related foundations, auxiliary corporations and similar organizations.

## THE BENEFITS

For decades, the University has faced a Hobson's choice of restraining access or curtailing quality.

- UUP's proposals, if funded, would permit a gradual but essential return to SUNY's historical role as a gateway to higher education for prospective students who have the skills but lack the financial means.
- These recommendations would help revitalize the quality of SUNY's educational programs and be instrumental in improving retention and raising graduation rates.
- Enacting legislation to provide external oversight and expand SUNY Administration's role in the programs and transactions of its research and campus-based foundations would help ensure that these entities are limited to and perform in the best interest of the University's educational mission.