



UNITED UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONS

Testimony on Recruiting and Educating Teachers for All

Presented To:

Assembly Higher Education Committee
Assemblywoman Deborah J. Glick, Chair

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Chairperson Glick and members of the Assembly Committee on Higher Education, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today regarding the changing demographics of students in higher education and the importance of educational opportunity programs.

I am Frederick E. Kowal, President of United University Professions. UUP is the nation's largest higher education union, representing more than 35,000 academic and professional faculty at SUNY four-year campuses statewide. Our members serve hundreds of thousands of students and patients at SUNY academic institutions, health sciences centers and public teaching hospitals administered directly by SUNY.

I would like to start by thanking the Assembly for providing additional funding in the 2015-16 state budget for key programs that help make public higher education more affordable and attainable for New York students and their families. In February, hundreds of SUNY students, counselors and faculty from SUNY's Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) and Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC) travelled from all over the state to Albany to advocate for funding increases for these important programs. On their behalf, I would like to thank the Assembly for listening.

The Evolving Needs of Today's Students

As the demographics of the student population in higher education have changed over the last several decades, so have students' specific needs. Although affordability is still a major factor in a person's decision to enroll in college and stay in college, other variables are also at play. Low-income students are more likely to be financially independent, to be first-generation students, to be students of color, and to be parents. According to a 2014 report by the Institute for Women's Policy Research:

- Independent students are approximately three times more likely than dependent students to work full-time in addition to taking classes.
 - o Black and Native American or Alaska Native students are more likely than students of other racial/ethnic backgrounds to work full-time.
- In 2012, 4.8 million independent college students—26 percent of the total U.S. college population—had dependent children.
 - o Women of color in postsecondary education are more likely than other college students to have dependent children.

- Dependent students are substantially more likely than independent students to receive a degree or certificate within six years.
 - o White and Asian women were more likely than black and Hispanic women to complete a degree or certificate within 6 years of enrolling in college.

These students are disproportionately likely to have little or no money to contribute to college expenses. They are also in need of other supplemental services to complete their college education. According to an April 2014 Institute for Women's Policy Research study, low-income students face greater time constraints; have less access to information about enrollment, careers, and financial aid; and are saddled with more unmet financial needs. They face many more obstacles on their path to earning a college degree, and the chances of completing their education are poor. The services offered to students on college campuses should reflect the varied circumstances that affect low-income students' decision to enter college and their ability to be successful.

EOP: A success statewide

SUNY's EOP provides access, academic support, and financial aid to students from low-income families. EOP students not only receive services to meet their unique needs, but they also are more successful in their college careers. The current graduation rate for EOP students in baccalaureate programs is higher than the national graduation rate for baccalaureate students. Every year, more than 30,000 students apply for just 2,500 available spaces in the program. Since its inception in 1967, the EOP has been among the most successful access programs in the country and the model for many similar programs across the U.S.

In this economic climate, it is crucial that the EOP and EOCs remain vital and available for low-income New Yorkers who need extra preparation to excel in a college setting. These programs help SUNY meet its mission of access and opportunity for ALL of New York's students. Simply put, it would be shortsighted to not invest in the expansion of a program that has a proven track record and has served as a model for many other access programs across the country. To reallocate funds intended for opportunity programs system-wide, such as EOP, as is proposed in SUNY's Performance and Investment Fund, to a few arbitrarily selected campuses is unconscionable. We must ensure that every SUNY campus and every SUNY student has access to programs supported by tax dollars—not just a select few.

United University Professions believes that not only should the EOP program funding be maintained, it should be expanded to broaden and deepen the fundamental

support it provides students. SUNY campuses would only benefit by replicating the successes of the EOP in other program areas.

In its draft report of findings and recommendations, the 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. This is why we will introduce legislation in the upcoming legislative session to create *Recruiting and Educating Teachers for All*, a pilot teacher opportunity program that would address the worsening crisis of recruiting and retaining teachers in our under-resourced rural, urban and suburban districts, and attract more underrepresented and economically disadvantaged individuals to careers in teaching.

Recruiting and Educating Teachers for All

Recruiting and Educating Teachers for All is modeled after the EOP; it is designed to build off of the successes of EOP and tailor its strengths to further support SUNY’s teacher education programs. The program is also intended to address the “leaky” pipeline of educators in New York state and provide admission and completion opportunities for prospective teachers.

Student enrollment and program completion in New York state teacher education programs have been on the decline. Recent federal data show that enrollments in the state’s public and private college-based teacher education programs fell nearly 40 percent, from 79,225 in 2008-09 to 47,872 in 2012-13. There have been similar results on a national level; federal data also show that the number of people entering teacher education programs declined by 30 percent from 2010 to 2014. *The New York Times* recently stated, “Across the country, districts are struggling with shortages of teachers, particularly in math, science and special education.” In New York state, we are already seeing serious teacher shortages in areas such as special education, technology education, and early childhood education. Substitute teacher shortages across the state reveal a continuation of the decline of prospective teachers in recent years.

This declining recruitment of future teachers has exacerbated an already growing diversity problem. There are proportionately more white individuals and fewer people of color enrolled in teacher preparation programs compared to the K–12 student population nationwide. Diversity in education that begins with the teacher provides social benefits such as reinforcing the value of a student’s own identity and providing more role models for all students.

Despite the fact that New York leads the nation in enrolling the largest number of teacher candidates annually, the potential pool of teachers of color and candidates from underrepresented groups is shrinking and faces additional obstacles from the negative changes imposed on teachers and teacher education programs in recent years. The most recent Title II data for AY 2011-12 and AY 2012-13 reflects this; it shows that the majority of students in NYS Teacher Education Program—approximately 70 percent— are white.

The Albert Shanker Institute, in a September report titled “The State of Teacher Diversity in American Education,” made several recommendations to increase diversity in teaching aimed at policymakers at the federal, state and district levels. *Recruiting and Educating Teachers for All* incorporates several of its policy recommendations:

- **“Support the development and expansion of programs with evidence of helping to recruit, mentor and support minority teachers.”**
 - *Recruiting and Educating Teachers for All* is modeled after New York’s highly successful EOP, which has recruited tens of thousands of economically disadvantaged and minority students who have gone on to complete college degrees and enter the state workforce.
- **“Investing in and supporting high-quality teacher education programs at public colleges and universities serving large numbers of minority students.”**
 - *Recruiting and Educating Teachers for All* meets this through its investment in SUNY’s public teacher education programs, which provide access to students at 17 campuses around the state.
- **“Establish incentives for close partnerships between colleges of education and school districts and charter networks.”**
 - *Recruiting and Educating Teachers for All* supports collaboration between college/university programs and P-12 schools to develop orientation programs that would introduce prospective teacher education students to the field of teaching. The program emphasizes partnerships between SUNY teacher education programs and school districts in need of diverse teachers.
- **“Particular attention needs to be paid to providing adequate mentoring, support and training in culturally responsive practices to novice teachers—of all races and ethnicities.”**
 - *Recruiting and Educating Teachers for All* enhances existing post-employment support and mentoring requirements to bolster new teacher retention.

Students entering *Recruiting and Educating Teachers for All* would begin the program with an orientation that provides opportunities to interact with P-12 teachers and students to expose prospective teacher candidates to teaching experiences and teaching environments. As with EOP, students may receive support services such as academic, career and personal counseling, as well as tutoring and supplemental instruction. *Recruiting and Educating Teachers for All* also provides financial assistance for non-tuition-related expenses, as part of a student's overall financial aid package. Each student will receive ongoing support as they work to complete the NYS certification process—including vouchers to cover costs for all required workshops, initial certification exams and fingerprinting required for certification.

UUP has demonstrated a strong, unwavering commitment to high-quality teacher education programs. Our members are directly involved in teaching 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. *Recruiting and Educating Teachers for All* will help our members enhance the quality education they already provide to students and ensure prospective teachers long-term success in their careers.

I'd like to again thank Chairperson Glick and the Assembly for their time and efforts in exploring the successes of SUNY's opportunity programs, and the potential for expansion of these support programs. As expressed through testimony today, the benefits the EOP provides can be replicated in other areas on SUNY campuses, such as teacher education programs.

Recruiting and Educating Teachers for All extends the opportunities that EOP students receive to underrepresented and economically disadvantaged teacher candidates, so that they too may reach their full potential. I look forward to further discussing the potential of *Recruiting and Educating Teachers for All* with members of the Assembly in the upcoming legislative session.

Thank you for your time today.