



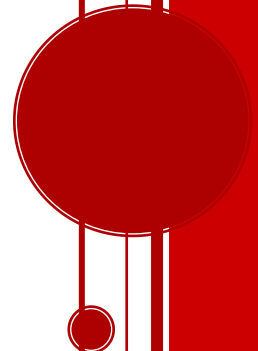
UNITED UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONS

*State University of New York Board of
Trustees Public Hearing regarding
university issues*

Presented To:
State University of New York Board of Trustees

*Presented By:
Frederick E. Kowal, Ph.D.
President*

11/6/2014



United University Professions

State University of New York Board of Trustees Public Hearing regarding university issues

Chairman McCall and distinguished members of the Board of Trustees, thank you for this opportunity to speak about university issues, including UUP proposals for ensuring that the State University of New York continues to provide an accessible, affordable, quality education for all New Yorkers.

My name is Fred Kowal and I am the President of United University Professions. UUP is the largest higher education union in the nation. We represent more than 35,000 academic and professional faculty and staff on 29 SUNY campuses, plus System Administration and Empire State College. 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. SUNY's public hospitals in Syracuse, Brooklyn, and Stony Brook provide life-saving services and quality, accessible health care to hundreds of thousands of patients each year. They are relied upon by the many communities they serve. Their central role in the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) program and the important safety net services they provide must be maintained. SUNY and the state are morally and ethically obligated to protect these services and prevent them from being undermined or diminished, which privatization or downsizing would facilitate.

With SUNY forced to deal with millions in state aid cuts since 2010, years of virtually flat state funding, and the increasing expense of higher education, there needs to be a plan to properly fund SUNY—every year.

If we want to change the system, there needs to be a plan for funding, timing, inclusion, and implementation. It has been said that "a goal without a plan is just a wish." I want more than a wish for SUNY. There must be a plan!

UUP has developed a series of initiatives, and yes a plan, for improving funding to SUNY and for building a more accessible, affordable, quality public higher education system. Today, I would like to share these ideas and invite SUNY to join UUP in developing a realistic, achievable long-term plan for student success and a thriving public university system.

As you may remember from last session, UUP supported and pushed for the creation of a permanent endowment to provide a long-term source of funding for SUNY. We believe in this plan and once again, with the backing of NYSUT and its other affiliates, we are advocating for the creation of an endowment.

This endowment would help rebuild SUNY's academic departments depleted by chronic underfunding. It would increase full-time faculty, professional, and support staff lines; and give part-time and contingent employees opportunities to move into full-time positions. A permanent SUNY endowment will safeguard the quality of public higher education in New York.

In addition, UUP will press for a 50 percent target for state funding for our public university system and a real Maintenance of Effort (MOE). The state should not depend on students for the bulk of SUNY funding. Yet students, through tuition and fees, account for approximately 65 percent of SUNY's funding. UUP asks that the state cover at least half of the funding for SUNY, its fair share.

To provide a strong financial foundation, SUNY must be funded by a genuine Maintenance of Effort. There needs to be an MOE that accurately reflects the needs of the University. An effective MOE will include SUNY's hospitals and cover the basic expenses of its state-operated campuses, as well as the cost of collective bargaining agreements.

UUP also supports a program to provide additional incentive spending for campuses. This incentive program would reward campuses that: embrace a move to hire more full-time faculty and staff; move adjunct and contingent faculty to full-time positions; aggressively pursue a more diverse faculty, staff and student body; and broaden and deepen student support programs such as the SUNY Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) to ensure that more underprepared and under-resourced students can get into the University and succeed. UUP believes that any incentive program must emphasize access, quality, and affordability. However, before such a program could be successfully implemented, the state must first provide at least half of SUNY's funding and a genuine Maintenance of Effort (MOE).

UUP is also pursuing ideas like a program that I call PreCEDE or Pre-College Entrance Development Effort. PreCEDE will be instrumental in providing underrepresented and under-resourced families with the guidance and support necessary to identify potential career paths, complete and submit a college application, apply for financial assistance, and be prepared for college challenges. Combined with the expansion of programs such as SUNY Stony Brook's EOP summer program to provide access to aggressive pre-college work, PreCEDE will provide the guidance and support necessary to increase college enrollment and completion among underrepresented and underserved students statewide. PreCEDE will deliver a direct response to the recent reports that fewer than 40 percent of New York State high school graduates are ready for college.

Lastly, UUP is focusing on developing proposals to lower the incredibly high debt burden facing college students and recent graduates. We cannot wait for Congress to act; New York must take the lead. To diminish outstanding loan burdens on New York students, UUP is advocating a refinancing program that would provide the equivalent of an interest rate cap subsidy. This program will allow student loan borrowers to refinance loans through a New York State

student loan refinancing program at much lower interest rates than they currently pay. This program will lower repayment costs for students and generate economic growth for the state as borrowers are able to put money toward other purchases. In addition, UUP is exploring a loan forgiveness program for adjuncts working for SUNY.

So, how would these innovations be funded? Tapping some of the state's current surplus could be one funding source. With the success Attorney General Eric Schneiderman has had in his actions against Wall Street banks, I can think of no better use for those hundreds of millions of dollars of ill-gotten gains than to use them to rebuild SUNY.

I encourage SUNY to stand with the union, as we advocate for a fully funded SUNY system. I am interested in developing a joint-advocacy agenda, so that our public higher education system is more than just maintained. It should be—and can be—a hallmark institution serving the best interest of New York's students.

Thank you.