

Restore Opportunity Restore SUNY



Supporting our Students

Caring for Patients

Funding for SUNY

In the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, UUP announced their NY HEALS coalition, a commitment to Health care, Education, Access, Leadership, and Sustainability. UUP continues to pursue these principles with its 2022 Legislative Agenda, which is focused on the access and delivery of health care for all and making SUNY a dynamic educational vehicle for economic, social, and environmental change.

UUP believes SUNY should be a catalyst to propel New York State forward.

UUP members work at....

COMPREHENSIVE COLLEGES



HEALTH SCIENCE & ACADEMIC MEDICAL CENTERS



TECH. CAMPUSES



UNIVERSITY CENTERS



United University Professions

President Frederick E. Kowal, Ph.D

Contact Daniel Brown, Director of Legislative and Political Affairs - dbrown@uupmail.org, about UUP's legislative agenda

BUDGET PRIORITIES:

A Truly Public State University System

The State University of New York (SUNY) has seen a decade of flat budgets, forced down from the previous executive administration. Prior to that, SUNY's budgets saw severe state aid cuts, due to the Great Recession. The result of this disinvestment has left SUNY unable to adequately attract, enroll, retain, and graduate students. The abandonment of our public higher education system has directly led to drops in enrollment. SUNY's campuses have been left to wither on the vine. The time is now to reverse this and properly fund our state's public higher education system.

UUP stands ready to work with the Governor, the Legislature, the SUNY Board of Trustees, and SUNY leadership to deliver real results for our students, our patients, and our communities across the great state of New York.

Deliver Operating Aid to SUNY.

Not More Student Debt

As a public university, SUNY has limited ways of funding operations; two of which are student tuition and state operating support. Tragically, the funding of our public institutions has fallen increasingly on the backs of students and their families. Direct state support to SUNY campuses has remained flat despite rising operational costs and increased operational needs. The costs for these increased needs have been met with tuition and fees, and offloading services onto auxiliary enterprises, which charge our students and their families even more; faculty, staff, and visitors to campuses are also forced to absorb that financial hit. As a result, students are putting in \$2 for every \$1 of direct state operating support. This is an untenable situation that has gone on for far too long. It is time for the state to fund SUNY fully and fairly.

This year's budget must include \$150 million in new direct operating aid to the state-operated campuses. This will be a crucial first step toward reversing the state's decades-long disinvestment of SUNY. Sadly, many campuses have been forced to deactivate programs, backfill positions

with adjunct and part-time faculty, and cut student services due to ever increasing operating costs. This lack of investment by the state is shortsighted and cheats our students of the education and experience necessary for a world-class workforce and citizenry. With this requested operating aid, SUNY will be better prepared to meet the developing needs of our students and our communities post-pandemic.

UUP urges the state to increase direct state support to SUNY's campuses.



Fully Eliminate the TAP Gap Now

The 2021-22 State Budget included an increase to the maximum award under the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) as well as a commitment to eliminate the TAP Gap in four years. UUP applauds the Legislature for taking steps to finally close the TAP Gap. But to get resources to SUNY campuses doing the most crucial work, we must accelerate this process. Many of the SUNY campuses in the most precarious financial positions are accepting the most TAP-eligible students. Eliminating the TAP Gap now would ease the financial burden on these campuses, while allowing them to provide educational opportunity to thousands of students who might not otherwise be able to afford a SUNY education. Through TAP, these students have a pathway to upward economic mobility for themselves and their families.



The TAP Gap, the difference between SUNY tuition and what TAP covers, **will constitute a loss of approximately \$46.5 million this year for SUNY's 29 state-operated campuses.** This loss of revenue is absorbed by the campuses, while still providing a quality education. The TAP Gap, and the chronic underfunding of SUNY, threatens students' success. Because the campuses must absorb these costs, they are forced to cover these losses in a variety of ways, including cutting programs and student services. The \$500 increase to the maximum TAP award last year is still about 23% less than SUNY's tuition; it leaves a \$1,570 gap for each student who receives the maximum award. Forgoing the phased-in approach to shrinking the TAP Gap and instead fully funding TAP today would quickly pay off for our students, our campuses and our University. Eliminating the TAP Gap would allow for a more

immediate and much needed investment in new full-time faculty, increased advising, counseling, tutoring and course offerings to help students graduate-and graduate on time.

UUP urges the state to permanently eliminate the TAP gap this year.

Reform & Expand the Excelsior Scholarship Program

With negotiations in Washington failing to secure free college across the country, now more than ever, New York must step up as a leader in higher education by securing access and opportunity to a college education. The Excelsior Scholarship Program, created in 2017, has been a financial lifeline for many families across New York. But for far too many families, the program has proven difficult to utilize. By reforming the Excelsior program to cover fees as well as room and board, New York can establish a real "first in the nation" program and attract students to our public higher education system. By removing the financial barrier to a college degree, it is estimated that 100,000 more students would attend 2-year and 4-year public colleges in New York. Currently, Excelsior is a "last dollar" program that can only be used towards tuition. This has left thousands of families still struggling to cover student fees and the cost of room and board, which is significantly more than tuition at SUNY.



Programmatic and eligibility constraints have hampered students seeking to participate in the program. New York State has allocated over \$585 million since the program was created in 2017. Yet in 2017-2018, the total amount awarded for SUNY students was just over \$58.6 million; and \$10.4 million for CUNY students. In 2018-2019, the amount awarded to SUNY students was \$84 million; and \$14.9 million for CUNY students. **This leaves over \$400 million in budgeted funds unspent.** These



dollars should be utilized to help students cover the cost of room and board and mandatory fees, easing the financial burden of public higher education and increasing accessibility to more New Yorkers.

UUP urges the state to Reform & Expand the Excelsior Scholarship Program to cover room and board and mandatory fees.



Reinstate a 5-year Capital Plan

The reinstatement of a 5-year Capital Plan for SUNY would provide long-term surety to campuses to plan for strategic building needs, as they undertake the multiyear process of scoping, design, and financing. SUNY is responsible for the maintenance of more than 1,800 buildings across its state-operated campuses; 40% of SUNY buildings are more than 50 years old. Lack of infrastructure and building investment undermines the ability of campuses to compete for students and faculty, particularly in the fields of science, technology, and research. ***But UUP fiercely objects to the campus matching program within the current capital budget and seeks reprogramming of that \$200 million to a green transformation program.*** This program would give priority to campus projects that address climate change and a reliance on fossil fuels.

UUP supports the reinstatement of a 5-year SUNY Capital Plan with the inclusion of a green transformation fund.

Join Public University Systems Across the United States by Creating a SUNY Endowment

UUP is calling on the state to establish the SUNY Environment, Health, and Justice Endowment. To better prepare the entire SUNY system for the unknown and potentially disastrous climate future and to imbue racial justice into our system in perpetuity, we call on the state to establish a system-wide endowment to fund climate change and disaster preparedness. The endowment would also be used to support currently existing racial justice initiatives for hiring faculty and staff. Annual tuition raises are insufficient to develop the massive change in culture, business, and public services needed to adequately prepare for an expected increase in climate disasters across the state. Communities of color have borne the brunt of these disasters, and SUNY's hiring from these communities continually fails to reach adequate levels. The SUNY system currently houses endowments through their foundation system, with each campus raising funds on their own for their respective campus. This disconnected system has created large inequalities in donations per school. By creating a SUNY-wide endowment, monies could be spent more holistically on projects and professions that support these aims.

UUP supports establishing the SUNY Environment, Health, and Justice Endowment.



SUNY's Teaching Hospitals: Training Medical Professionals, Providing Public Health Care

Over the last 20 months of a deadly and unrelenting pandemic, UUP members have stepped up and done the exhausting, unrelenting work to save lives. We must acknowledge what our members at SUNY's public teaching hospitals have sacrificed and been through for nearly two years and recognize that their life-saving work continues—today and every day. Together, like no time in our history, we must fight for our state University hospitals. From COVID to debt service, to Medicaid cuts, to federal changes to the DSH program, and the last decade of pushing privatization, our SUNY hospitals have been under assault—while the need for their services and care only grows. We have a responsibility to support the state's public teaching hospitals, and we must keep them prepared to respond to future pandemics and state health crises.

Restore Critical Mission Funding to the SUNY Hospitals

Between 2008 and 2017, the state's support for SUNY's hospitals was cut by 75% and eliminated completely in 2018. The coronavirus pandemic has made it obvious that New York needs fully funded public hospitals. SUNY's public teaching hospitals are safety net hospitals that continue to care for the most vulnerable members of our community, regardless of their ability to pay. Please consider their importance in responding to COVID-19. SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University in Brooklyn was designated as a COVID-only hospital in one of the hardest hit areas of the state and the hospital has now administered almost 10,000 vaccines. Stony Brook University Hospital has treated thousands of COVID patients and has administered more than 20,000 vaccines at its state-run sites. Upstate Medical University in Syracuse developed the world's most sensitive saliva test that is being used at all SUNY campuses and many private and public institutions across the state, including Albany International Airport, and has administered over 19,000 vaccines.

Essential mission funding is required for their continued success. SUNY hospitals provide care for everyone who walks through their doors. SUNY hospitals continue to be the only state agency or institution required to pay salaries, fringe benefits, and debt service for necessary hospital maintenance and operations. Mission funding for the hospitals was created in 2001, partly to offset that

burden. The state must provide proper levels of support to maintain the quality services delivered by these public hospitals every day.

UUP urges the state to restore \$87 million for essential mission funding for SUNY's hospitals.



Treat State Agencies Equitably: Absorb SUNY Hospital Debt Service

UUP seeks parity for New York's public teaching hospitals by including debt service relief for their capital projects as part of the regular NYS capital budget. Downstate Medical, Stony Brook, and Upstate Medical are the only SUNY state-related entities that must shoulder these costs, a burden which diverts valuable resources from being invested in patient services, medical professionals and staff, and physical improvements. Constituents in every district of the Assembly and Senate



benefit from these crucial safety net institutions. Their combined workforce resides across more than 2,000 of New York State's 2,100 zip codes, and the hundreds of thousands of patients they serve each year come from every corner of the state.

Because the SUNY public teaching hospitals are the backbone of the state's public health care system, it is essential that we provide them with the support they need to continue providing care to New Yorkers. We all know that the human and financial losses of the last year have been enormous across the state. Yet, as we consider ways to support our health care heroes, debt service relief is a direct action the Governor and Legislature can undertake this year to free up and **reinvest nearly \$70 million back into our state's public health care system.**

UUP requests the state include debt service for SUNY's hospitals in the State's capital budget plan.

Fully Implement and Expand the Medical Education Opportunity Program (MEOP)

The COVID-19 pandemic has put enormous pressure on the state's health care system and exacerbated inequalities in health care access and education. Anyone who has followed the health care industry knows we are battling a staffing shortage, and the shortages in health care professionals will only grow more severe in the coming decade. Stress, burnout, and long-term illness from COVID are all the result of this pandemic, but we also have an aging population and a growing need for industry professionals. SUNY must play a role in reshaping our future. We must expand courses and program slots for students in these medical fields. A major component to address the staffing crisis, the Medical Education Opportunity Program, was adopted by SUNY last year as a pilot program. This idea, introduced by UUP and rolled out this past summer at Upstate Medical, needs to be fully implemented and expanded to cover programs in the fields of clinical lab technicians, nursing, physician assistants and physical therapy.

When implemented, MEOP will draw students from underrepresented and under-resourced communities. With proper support, at an **initial**

cost of \$5 million, more diverse cohorts of students studying to be doctors and other health care professionals will complete their degrees and care for patients in their communities.

UUP requests funding and implementation of the Medical Education Opportunity Program (MEOP).

Expand the Mission of Downstate Medical to be the Center of Maternal and Child Services

SUNY Downstate is in the epicenter of a severe maternal morbidity crisis and has a mission to serve the Central Brooklyn community regardless of patients' income or ability to pay. This academic medical center is uniquely positioned to research and address maternal morbidity and children's health care issues. This includes social workers for postpartum and labor and delivery units; medical assistants for the prenatal clinic; proper nutrition staffing; additional nursing staff for labor and delivery and postpartum units; increased data collection; monitoring and performance improvement; quality improvement efforts; and a nurse educator on labor and delivery and postpartum units to allow for continuous nursing education. SUNY Downstate must expand its services and mission to be the center of maternal and child services in Brooklyn. In conjunction with these efforts, we support the passage of the Chisholm Chance Plan (S322), introduced by Senator Zellnor Myrie.

UUP urges the state to expand the mission of SUNY Downstate to be the center of maternal and child services in Brooklyn and pass the Chisholm Chance Plan.



Childcare for SUNY, Childcare for New York

Childcare in New York and across the country is being squeezed on all sides. The ongoing labor shortage, the increase in overhead costs, and the loss of Pre-K students has childcare providers on the brink. To provide quality, affordable childcare, New York must provide more assistance to providers.

17 SUNY state-operated campuses are home to NYS employee worksite childcare centers. UUP urges the legislature to provide operating support, reimburse centers for teacher certification, and allocate capital dollars to allow these child care centers to service more children.



Campus Pre-School & Early Childhood Center



Brockport Child Development Center



University at Buffalo Child Care Center



Buffalo State College Child Care



Cobleskill Campus Child Care



SUNY Cortland Child Care Center



Delhi Campus Child Care



The Children's Center at SUNY Brooklyn



The Children's Center at Farmingdale State



Campus and Community Children's Center



The Children's Center at Morrisville State College



Bugbee Children's Center



SUNY Plattsburgh Child Care Center



SUNY Potsdam Child Care Center



The Children's Center at Purchase College



Stony Brook Child Care Services



Upstate Child Care Center



NON-BUDGETARY PRIORITIES:

Transparency and Shared Governance Across SUNY

Our SUNY campuses are communities within communities. In these settings, everyone should have a voice: administration, students, staff, academics, and professionals. Too frequently, employees lack the ability to speak or have an influence. Faculty representatives are assigned a seat in the corner as an observer and at some campuses have been asked not to speak. The faculty representative's status is that of an observer, not a participant. This lack of inclusion and openness extends to SUNY campus finances as well. More than half of the 30 SUNY campus foundations have not been audited by SUNY in at least 10 years. Recently, the Office of the State Comptroller regained audit authority over SUNY contracts after years of opaque operations and isolated scandals. Although a 2019 OSC report noted that SUNY has made progress in addressing these problems, there are no mechanisms in place for ongoing monitoring and enforcement. Legislation is needed to ensure permanent transparency and incorporate shared governance.

Mandate Campus Foundation Transparency

Many SUNY campuses contract with private, nonprofit foundations to receive and manage grants and donations in support of programs, real estate development, and other activities designed to further the missions of the SUNY campuses. While state funding for campuses has declined for years, SUNY campus-related foundations are thriving. SUNY's 31 campus-foundations—part of a growing network of 80-plus SUNY-affiliated private nonprofits—have more than \$2.3 billion in net assets and spend hundreds of millions each year with little accountability or transparency to SUNY stakeholders. Furthermore, not all foundations are equal: 10 campuses control the vast majority of all net assets, and two campuses control nearly half. SUNY stakeholders, donors and New York state taxpayers have a right to know how this money is being used.

Because these foundations are technically private nonprofit agencies, they are not required to abide by the same regulations, protocols, and transparency standards of state agencies. UUP believes that

the SUNY campus foundations and their auxiliary businesses should not be allowed to hide behind the shell of a private entity. They should be subject to the state's Freedom of Information Law. We urge the Legislature to pass legislation requiring SUNY campus foundations and their subsidiaries to submit annual reports and to post them publicly on the SUNY website.

***UUP seeks passage of Senate bill S03540
(Sen. Stavisky).***

Faculty & Professional Voting Rights on College Councils

Each SUNY campus is required by NYS Education Law (Article 8, Section 356) to form a campus council to supervise campus operations, foster relationships between the institution and local communities, and promote the institution's interests. UUP seeks an amendment to Article 8, Section 356 that would require permanent voting rights to faculty and staff on campus councils. Under the SUNY Board of Trustees bylaws, campus



councils are required to invite a representative from the faculty to regularly attend campus council meetings. The Faculty Governance Handbook states that these representatives often enter “freely into the discussion” at campus council meetings and reports on faculty concerns in business. Without voting rights, the concerns and input of faculty and professionals are not truly part of shared governance and in many instances are ignored by campus administration. We can make our campuses more inclusive and more democratic by amending the NYS Education Law to require voting rights for faculty and staff.

Institute Voting Rights within SUNY Board of Trustees for SUNY Faculty Senate

UUP seeks to give voting rights to the SUNY Faculty Senate president on SUNY’s Board of Trustees. This would require a change to NYS Education Law Article 8, Section 353. The state Education Law prescribes the composition of the Board of Trustees and states that the Faculty Senate president has an ex-officio and non-voting seat. Allowing voting rights for the Faculty Senate president would be in line with the president’s existing role as a Trustee: representing faculty and staff. To be fully effective, representation must include the power of the vote.

UUP requests amending NYS Education Law for faculty and professional votes on college councils.

UUP urges the full representation for faculty on the SUNY Board of Trustees.

Promote Democracy

As the assault on voting rights advances nationwide, New York State and SUNY campuses can protect New Yorkers from this erosion of our democracy by bolstering the elections system in the state. Despite the pandemic, many states have cut back on alternative voting methods and locations, ultimately disenfranchising voters. UUP believes New York must ensure that people are free to vote and able to vote with ease.

Make Election Day a State Holiday

UUP supports making Election Day a public holiday to make it easier for New Yorkers to engage in the electoral process. An inability to take time off from work should never be a barrier to voting. Illinois recently made Election Day a public holiday in their legislative session. It is time we make this happen and ensure that all New Yorkers can have their voices heard in our election process. As other states infringe on the rights of citizens to cast their ballots, New York should affirm that our democracy is stronger when everyone participates.

UUP urges the state to declare Election Day a state holiday.



Voter Access on Campuses

UUP supports Senate Bill S04658, which requires voting locations on college campuses with more than 300 registered voters at that location. This bill passed the Senate in the 2021-2022 Legislative Session. As many college students do not have personal transportation, this bill will eliminate a barrier to voting for students and residence hall professionals by siting a polling station on campus. We must engage our newest eligible voters and help establish the habit of participating in our democracy. Assisting college students in voting can help promote life-long activism in our government.

UUP supports passage of Senate Bill S04658 (Sen. Parker).



UUP Also Supports:

- Fighting any attempts to cut Medicare benefits or any reduction in retiree benefits.
- Assembly Bill A225, Senate Bill S2721, which requires the governor to publicly disclose all fossil fuel tax expenditures and installs a sunset date five years from passage for these subsidies, except on a case-by-case basis for those the state legislature deems essential.
- The New York Health Act, which would provide comprehensive, universal health coverage for every New York resident and worker.
- With our community allies, NY Renews, passage of the Climate and Community Investment Act (CCIA) (Assembly Bill A06969, Senate Bill S04264). The CCIA would make polluters pay for the damage they do, create well-paid green jobs, invest in communities hit hardest by COVID-19 and the climate crisis, and get New York to a 100% renewable economy.



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