

## Higher Education

### *Increasing State Support for New York's Public Colleges and Universities*

The Assembly has long called on the State to increase its investment in public higher education and has fought to maintain affordable tuition levels. New York State's colleges and universities are renowned for their academic quality and play an increasing role in the State's economy. This year, the Executive proposal includes \$1.3 billion in State support for State-operated campuses of the State University of New York (SUNY) and \$1.04 billion for the Senior Colleges of the City University of New York (CUNY) in the 2008-09 Academic Year. This results in a reduction in General Fund operating support of \$38.2 million below SFY 2007-08 funding levels for SUNY. The Executive proposal would maintain General Fund operating support for CUNY Senior Colleges at SFY 2007-08 funding levels.

The Executive proposal does not call for a tuition increase at either SUNY or CUNY. Holding the line on tuition keeps the cost of a college education within reach of New York's hard-working families (Figure 6 and Figure 7).

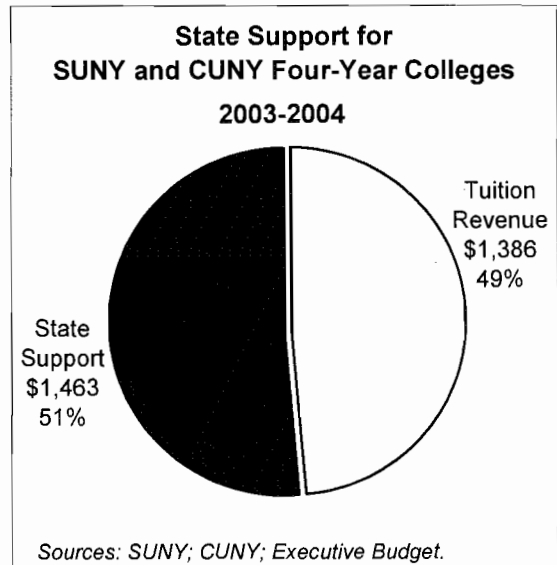


Figure 6

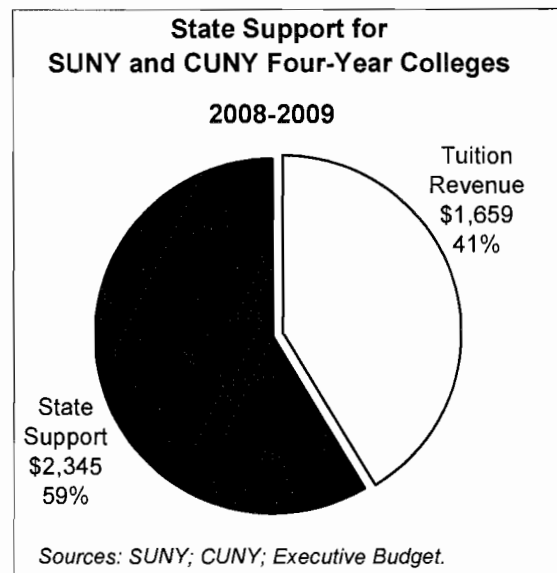


Figure 7

However, the Executive recommends a community college base aid decrease of \$50 per full-time equivalent (FTE) student, decreasing the level of State support from \$2,675 to \$2,625 for both SUNY and

CUNY Community Colleges. This represents the elimination of a 2007-08 Assembly priority, when the Legislature increased Base Aid by \$50 per FTE. As a result, 2008-09 State support for SUNY community colleges would be \$452.1 million, with the \$8.3 million Base Aid reduction offset by a \$9.2 million enrollment increase. State support for CUNY community colleges would be \$174.8 million, with the \$3.1 million Base Aid reduction offset by a \$2.1 million enrollment increase.

#### *Endowing Public Higher Education in New York State*

The Executive budget proposes the New York State Higher Education Endowment to provide for investments in New York State's postsecondary education system. The proposed endowment would provide for new full-time faculty members, student financial aid to expand access in higher education, and grants for research and development. All of these purposes are priorities the Assembly has long promoted. However, details of the funding mechanism remain unclear and no appropriation is provided for the New York State Higher Education Endowment in the 2008-09 budget.

#### *Investing in the Infrastructure of SUNY and CUNY*

The current 5-year capital plan, approved by the Legislature appropriated over \$3.55 billion in capital funds for SUNY and over \$2.16 billion to CUNY. The 2008-09 Executive proposal includes a new 5-year capital plan for SUNY and CUNY. Investment in SUNY and CUNY

facilities is a critical priority of the Assembly.

The Executive provides \$1.6 billion in capital projects at SUNY State-Operated schools, and \$960 million at CUNY Senior Colleges. These projects are to be administered by a new University Projects Capital Review Board. In 2008-09, the Executive appropriates the first \$550 million of a planned \$2.75 billion at SUNY and \$284 million of a planned \$1.42 billion at CUNY for critical maintenance projects across the system. An additional \$526 million is appropriated for projects at SUNY community colleges and \$260 million for projects at CUNY community college.

Projects at SUNY's Hospitals and Dormitory facilities are also authorized (\$1.02 billion). However, these projects are revenue generating by nature and are self-funded. The Executive also proposes a new \$75 million green initiative for energy efficient projects at SUNY financed through future energy savings.

#### *Providing Opportunity in Postsecondary Education for All New Yorkers*

The Assembly has made opportunity programs that increase access the cornerstone of its higher education policy. However, the Executive budget reduces State support for these important programs by \$3.1 million. The 2008-09 Executive proposal provides \$19.8 million for the Educational Opportunity Program, \$24.2 million for the Higher Education Opportunity Program, \$16.3 million for SEEK and \$839,300 for College Discovery Program, \$19 million for STEP/CSTEP, \$12 million

for the Liberty Partnership Program and \$713,000 for the Teacher Opportunity Corps. The Assembly has long advocated for additional funding for opportunity programs.

In addition, the Executive proposal includes \$796.3 million in support for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) in SFY 2008-09. This reflects a \$60.9 million reduction in funding from SFY 2007-08 levels, it reflects lower costs of the program and \$34.19 million in cost saving measures. Specifically, these cost saving measures include: \$2.59 million resulting from denying TAP awards to students in default on federal loans, \$26.6 million from passing on to students a one percent federal fee on all student loans, and \$5 million in cost savings resulting from authorizing information sharing between the Higher Education Services Corporation and the Department of Tax and Finance to improve the collection of defaulted federal loans.