



## **Invest in CUNY and SUNY**

The CUNY and SUNY University Faculty Senates and the SUNY Faculty Council of Community Colleges urge the Governor and the Legislature to strengthen the State's investment in public higher education by

(1) passing and implementing a renewal of the NYSUNY 2020 legislation through the 2020-21 academic year. In 2011, state law-makers and Governor Cuomo acknowledged the benefits generated by our state's institutions of public higher education with the passage of the NYSUNY2020 legislation. This legislation was an important first step; however, NYSUNY2020 ends with the 2015-16 academic year;

(2) providing increased base funding to SUNY and CUNY community colleges to help offset the increasing tuition burden on New York's students;

(3) providing a true Maintenance of Effort (as outlined in Assembly Bill 3701A and Senate Bill 281A, passed in June 2015) by the State to provide funding for mandatory cost increases.

A healthy democratic society and the twenty-first economy demand an educated citizenry. State investment in public higher education generates significant benefits for citizens in their earning power as well as in their exposure to knowledge, ideas and expertise. Educated citizens get quality jobs, pay taxes, grow the economy, enjoy cultural and scientific exploration, engage in recreation, support the arts and connect with technological innovations. Educated citizens are healthier, more satisfied with their lives, and are less prone to criminal activity, which not only are benefits the individual, but also provides an economic benefit to society by reducing the level of social and health services that need to be provided. The economic, social, and health outcomes for an educated citizenry are undeniably and overwhelmingly positive.

As tuition costs of private higher education continue to escalate, well beyond the rate of inflation, public higher education has become the best value for the struggling middle class. Student indebtedness is a growing problem, saddling students with a decade or more of depressed spending power. Tuition at New York State's public universities and colleges has been relatively affordable and offers great value and opportunity for all of its citizens at any time of their lives.

High quality, affordable and accessible public higher education is available at CUNY and SUNY for the increasingly diverse population of New York State. Over the last decade, however, direct state support has declined in real terms. New York State could be the national leader in public higher education if it upholds its commitment to its citizens by increasing the funding of SUNY's 64 campuses and CUNY's 24 campuses. A failure to do so will place New York's system of public higher education in jeopardy and erode the State's promise to the citizens of the State.

*Approved by the Executive Committees of the SUNY University Faculty Senate, SUNY Faculty Council of Community Colleges, and CUNY University Faculty Senate, January 2016.*