



Faculty Council of Community Colleges Resolution: EXCOM2-24/25
Resolution Calling on the New York State Congressional Delegation to
Support the United States Department of Education

Adopted Unanimously by the FCCC Executive Committee, March 24, 2025
Endorsed unanimously by FCCC, April 5, 2025

WHEREAS the United States Congress, through the Department of Education Organization Act of 1979, established the United States Department of Education to ensure a coordinated, equitable, and effective national approach to educational policy recognizing that access to quality education is fundamental to economic mobility, social progress and democratic stability; and

WHEREAS community colleges serve as the most affordable and accessible entry point for millions of students, providing both a rigorous liberal arts foundation and high-quality workforce training that strengthens communities, fuels local economies, and prepares individuals for engaged citizenship and meaningful careers in high-demand industries; and

WHEREAS the United States Department of Education plays a vital role in sustaining the mission of community colleges by administering critical federal programs that support student success, including the Pell Grant program, Title III and Title V funding for minority-serving institutions, Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants, and other initiatives that expand both academic and career pathways; and

WHEREAS community colleges equip students with essential skills in critical thinking, communication and civic engagement through liberal arts education, while simultaneously serving as workforce pipelines in fields such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence—sectors vital to regional and national economic growth; and

WHEREAS students attending the State University of New York (SUNY) receive over \$600 million annually in Pell Grants, with nearly half enrolled in community colleges, underscoring the indispensable role of federal financial aid in expanding access to higher education for historically underserved and economically disadvantaged students and reinforcing the essential contribution of community colleges to workforce development and economic prosperity; and

WHEREAS while primary responsibility for education policy rests with state and local governments, the federal government has played a critical role since the civil rights

movement in safeguarding students' rights, ensuring that educational institutions uphold principles of access and equity, and preventing discrimination in education; and

WHEREAS the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights is essential in enforcing legal protections that ensure English learners receive necessary support, students of color have equitable access to advanced coursework and extracurricular programs, and all students receive appropriate redress for discrimination, thereby upholding the nation's commitment to educational equity and social justice; and

WHEREAS public higher education serves as a pillar of the public good, transforming individual lives while acting as an engine of economic development, a catalyst for sustainable communities, a foundation for democratic engagement, and a driver of innovation, creativity and social mobility; and

WHEREAS the United States Department of Education is fundamental to the nation's economic vitality and democratic integrity, fostering workforce development, innovation and civic engagement while ensuring that higher education remains accessible and affordable to all; and

WHEREAS the Executive Branch of the United States lacks the unilateral authority to dismantle or abolish the Department of Education without congressional action, safeguarding against executive overreach and preserving the integrity of the legislative process; and

WHEREAS any effort to diminish or dismantle the Department of Education would severely undermine the federal government's ability to support public higher education, enforce civil rights protections, and uphold educational equity nationwide;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that State University of New York (SUNY) Faculty Council of Community Colleges (FCCC) affirms the critical role of the U.S. Department of Education in ensuring access to high-quality public higher education, particularly through its funding and initiatives that support community colleges; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the SUNY FCCC calls upon the United States Congress to uphold its constitutional duty to serve the public interest by protecting and sustaining the Department of Education and its essential programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the SUNY FCCC urges the United States Congress to work in a bipartisan manner to preserve the core functions of the Department of Education, including directing resources to vulnerable students, low-income students, and students with disabilities; maintaining the Pell Grant and student loan programs that make higher education attainable; and enforcing civil rights protections that safeguard equitable educational opportunities for all students; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the SUNY FCCC calls upon policymakers to expand federal investments in community colleges and public higher education to ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed in an increasingly knowledge-based economy.