



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Suzi Oppenheimer

Legislature Authorizes SUNY Purchase to Build Senior Learning Community

Suzi Oppenheimer

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Senator Suzi Oppenheimer is pleased to announce legislative passage of her bill, S. 1846A, which would allow SUNY Purchase to lease land for the development of a senior residential learning center on campus. The senior facility would be operated by the Purchase College Advancement Corporation, a not-for-profit corporation.

University officials and interested seniors have long advocated for a residential learning community for seniors and sought legislators help in approving this public-private partnership.

"We are extremely grateful to Senator Oppenheimer and the NYS Senate for passage of the bill, which will provide for the ability of Purchase College to finally begin to develop a senior learning community. This is a win win for our students, faculty and the community," said SUNY Purchase President Thomas Schwartz.

At least 20 percent of the residential units in the senior learning community would be reserved for low income tenants. Westchester County residents would be given priority for 50 percent of those affordable housing units.

Said Senator Oppenheimer, "This legislation is long overdue. Not only does it provide the University with much needed revenue for student tuition assistance, but it allows senior residents convenient access to classes and the many theatrical and cultural events on campus for which the University is renowned. Students of all ages will benefit from the multigenerational perspective that this unique learning community will foster."

The bill mandates that 75 percent of the revenue generated by the senior learning community be used to provide financial aid to students eligible for tuition assistance. The remaining 25 percent would support additional full-time faculty positions.

Finally, the legislation further directs State University trustees to designate and maintain a minimum of 80 acres of campus property for permanent preservation as open space lands.

Senator Oppenheimer's bill passed the Senate on June 16, 2011. A companion measure, A.340A, sponsored by Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, passed the Assembly on June 15th. The measure will now be delivered to Governor Cuomo for his consideration.

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