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**UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE**

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**STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT  
SENATE OF CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

The City University of New York was founded on the premise that public higher education is a top priority for the people of our great state of New York. In recent years, a string of budget cuts and tuition hikes have made us drift from the promise of our University. The proposed Fiscal Year 2012-2013 budget takes some small steps in the right direction.

The most notable change in our funding is the additional state aid of \$57.6 million in mandatory needs funding for fringe benefits, which includes health insurance for adjunct professors. The CUNY community is definitely excited about any proposal that takes better care of the professionals responsible for preserving the great quality of our education. I think this increase will help CUNY attract and retain the best and the brightest professors to teach in our classrooms.

The restoration of the \$13.2 million that was cut from the previous budget is another bright spot in the proposed budget. It is not a significant increase, but I think the CUNY community is relieved to know that some the cuts have ceased for the moment.

In November, amid student protest and public outcry, I was the sole CUNY Board of Trustee member to vote against the proposed tuition hikes. The approved proposal called for an increase of tuition by 35% over the next five



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years, which will result in an incremental increase of \$300 every year. Our students are thus going to be carrying a heavier burden of the funding of CUNY. This has been the same harmful trajectory institutions of higher learning have been on in recent decades.

The ideal budget would take into concern the direct interest of our students. Students are not as strongly affected by small operational budget increases. They want to see cuts in their tuition. They want to see increases in financial aid. The aid has to be more tangible. The change has to be real.

Until we see a reverse in the trend that is slowly limiting the affordability and accessibility of higher education, we can expect to see our students continue to protest and our city lose its competitive edge.

It is my hope that our legislators in Albany can come to CUNY and SUNY campuses and see the great potential at our disposal. The time to nurture this potential is now, so please listen to the voice of the students some of whom voted for you because they believed in your ability to represent them.

Thank you for the work you are doing for our Great State of New York.