



## COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 3

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February 29, 2020

Honorable Liz Krueger  
New York State Senate  
172 State Street, Capitol Building  
Room 416 CAP  
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Senator Krueger,

On behalf of the parents of District 3 Public Schools and my colleagues of Community Education Council, District 3 (CEC3), thank you for hosting this hearing about the New York State budget for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. It is an honor to testify today about conditions in public elementary, middle and secondary schools on the Upper West Side and Southern Harlem, a collection of thirty institutions that my colleagues and I represent.

CEC3 focuses on resource advocacy that makes a difference in our Manhattan public schools: to improve student outcomes and teach culturally responsible and relevant education, to take good care of our students in need, and to strengthen the bonds of schools and communities. Challenges are especially acute in Harlem where schools struggle to enroll students but teach a disproportionately high percentage of homeless students and students in temporary housing, English language learning students, and students with disabilities. To that end, my testimony focuses on the budget as these challenges relate to the Foundation Aid formula and increased budget allocations embedded in Governor Cuomo's proposed budget that substantially increases revenues to charter schools.

This week CEC3 passed two resolutions that expand on the details of school resourcing and charter schools, and they are included as part of my testimony. In addition to the main idea that we unequivocally support legislation that calls for the full funding of the Contracts for Excellence campaign as ordered by the New York State Supreme Court, and fervently oppose any increase in charter school funding, I want to highlight the unsustainable conditions that some District 3 schools and families navigate every day.

I participated in the Queens roundtable discussion about Foundation Aid in December and spoke about hardships at many of our schools in the northern portion of District 3, where standard resourcing through the Foundation Aid and Fair Student Funding is utterly failing our students. These

small schools, and others around the city, operate on a skeletal budget. They can't afford books, and librarians, literacy coaches, robust special education service providers and social workers. Many don't have after-school programs, and most do not have full time nurses.

Full funding of the Foundation Aid formula would not solve all of these challenges, but would, if sent directly to the schools, as UFT President Michael Mulgrew testified at the December budget hearing also recommended, go a long way to bring under-resourced schools closer to a sustainable operation.

CEC3 has also called on the Department of Education to move towards a funding formula defined by "Essential Operations" as a result of this disconnect that exists between the funds that are directed to a school relative to the outlays that must be met in order to successfully deliver a sound, basic education to all students. We welcome your support as we push for this change and urge you to propose full funding of the Foundation Aid formula.

On the Governor's proposed budget in charter schools, we ask that you oppose increased funding to charter school organizations. The privatization of public education can never be completely eradicated. Private companies have been making money off of our kids since public schools first appeared after the Civil War, and charitable spending by private organizations can make a huge difference.

The charter school sector, however, was never meant to be a separate school system but that's exactly what it's become. It continues to grow far beyond its intended 5% of a district's student population and in northern District 3, approximately 40% of families now opt for a charter school, not their zoned public school. It's no longer an experiment; it's an ungoverned, separate school system, and the wealth of some of the organizations exacerbates daily challenges for the schools around it. Success Academy, for example, teaches approximately 17,000 students in NYC schools, and reports receipts of \$347,367,304<sup>1</sup>, representing \$20,422 per pupil. SACS also reports assets totaling \$223,265,465, another \$13,133 per pupil. Why would the state of New York allocate more funds to this organization? By comparison, a neighborhood school in Harlem with 443 students reports total receipts of \$5,200,107<sup>2</sup>, a total of \$11,738 per pupil.

Another wealthy charter organization in Upper Manhattan, The Equity Project, whose funding comes from some of the same hedge fund billionaires as SACS, teaches only 597 students but reports receipts of \$16,736,917<sup>3</sup>, a total of \$28,035 per pupil. This organization also reports assets worth \$39,413,761, a total worth another \$66,019 per student. Some of the wealthiest private schools in New York City don't have endowments at this level, and taxpayers should not be responsible for increased resources sent to this school.

The CEC3 resolution on charter schools, a mirror of a resolution being passed by several other CECs as well as the ECC, specifies many of the bills you and your colleagues have drafted to level

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.guidestar.org/search/success-academy-charter-schools>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nycenet.edu/search/ps76-a-philip-randolph-school>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.guidestar.org/search/the-equity-project-charter-school>

the playing field, and we thank you for this leadership. Charter school students and families are not the enemy of public schools. We must find a way to lift all children up, to help them navigate our world and reach their potential. But make no mistake, small community schools in many neighborhoods keep getting set up to fail through our funding mechanisms. Budget justice is needed now. A future generation of New Yorkers is counting on you.

Respectfully,

Kimberly Watkins  
CEC3 President

cc: State Senator Brian Benjamin  
State Senator Brad Hoylman  
State Senator Robert Jackson



# Four Freedoms Democratic Club

Testimony prepared by Four Freedoms Democratic Club

2020 NYS State Budget Forum  
NYS Senate Manhattan Delegation  
New York Academy of Medicine

March 2, 2020

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The Four Freedoms Democratic Club would like to thank the NYS Senate Manhattan Delegation for sponsoring this important public forum, and offering us the opportunity to share our opinion about 2020 NYS budget priorities.

Governor Cuomo's proposed budget seriously fails students in public schools in New York City.

FFDC advocates for full funding of the \$1.4 billion dollars owed by NYS to New York City public schools. As based on the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) case, the State is required to pay a balance of \$1.4 billion dollars to NYC public schools in long overdue Foundation Aid.

Public schools throughout the city are seriously underfunded due, in large part, to the state's failure to fully fund the \$1.4 billion dollars in Foundation Aid owed to NYC public schools. Denied these long overdue needed funds, NYC public schools lack the financial means to provide critical resources to our students, depriving millions of children the opportunities to reach their full potential. For far too long, NYC public school students have been prevented from receiving a sound and basic education - a mandated right, as determined by the CFE decision.

In conclusion, FFDC strongly urges members of the NYS Senate Manhattan Delegation to make fully funding \$1.4 billion dollars in Foundation Aid monies owed to NYC public schools - using the Foundation Aid formula - a top priority in state budget negotiations. It is critical that the discussion of potential revisions to the Foundation Aid Formula not be used to further delay full funding of the \$1.4 billion dollars in Foundation Aid to New York City public school. The students of New York City can't afford to wait any longer.

Founded in 2014, the Four Freedoms Democratic Club is an active, progressive, democratic club in Manhattan's Upper East Side and Roosevelt Island, dedicated to the ideals of FDR's "Four Freedoms" Speech. FFDC recently passed a resolution supporting advocacy for increased public school funding, which includes full funding by New York State of the \$1.4 billion dollars in Foundation Aid owed to New York City public schools as based on the Campaign for Fiscal Equity case.

Thank you for allowing the Four Freedoms Democratic Club the opportunity to express our priorities for the 2020 NYS budget negotiations.

Debra Freeman, FFDC Education Workgroup Co-Chair

**Mao Stéphane <bm2683@nyu.edu>**

Dear Senators

I am Steven Bincheng Mao, an undergraduate student at NYU and the founder of the East Coast Coalition for Tolerance and Non-Discrimination (ECC), a nonprofit organization consisting of students from 13 colleges, dedicated to promoting social inclusion for previously marginalized people.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

In order to promote social inclusion for minorities, a systematic education equity project necessitates appropriation.

Our state budget should emphasize on

1. investing in high-quality educational programs in or near communities of color. By investing in and incentivizing state and local middle school, high school, and college programs, we can increase competitiveness for minorities in fields of growing employment opportunities, especially health professions, computer science, and green energy.
2. diversifying the teaching profession through new regulations; As of today, about 80% of New York's 200,000 public-school teachers were white, while just 8% were black and 7% were Hispanic. Another 3% were Asian. Yet, over 57% of students are people of color. Studies show that teachers who share ethnicity with their students positively impact their academic performance: That is why we need to fund diversity initiatives as part of New York's school improvement plans.
3. Increasing fundings for the Civil Rights Bureau, which enforces laws protecting New Yorkers from discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation, differing abilities and beyond. More fundings will enable the Bureau to further study and address roots and patterns of discrimination that affect minorities, in addition to addressing symptoms.

Thank you.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Our state government is far from effectively directing the massive pools of wealth in our State into reversing the decline of educational opportunity for its residents. I write you as a member of the science faculty at one of the City University of NY colleges. Most of my students work full time to attend college. Those working at night fall asleep in class. The Excelsior Scholarship is not supporting our students because they can't meet its requirements.

Where is a financial transaction tax that could *abolish tuition*? Enactment of necessary legislation would be neither unprecedented nor outrageous. New York State levied a Financial Transaction Tax through 1981 - there's a stock transaction tax still on the books. Collection of this tax could be resumed and expanded instead of being automatically refunded.

The CUNY Fiscal Year 2021 preliminary budget incredibly reads:  
The FY2021 State Executive Budget recommends \$239.6 million in operating aid for the community colleges,  
**a decrease of \$10.8 million from the FY2020 level**

As I'm forced to consider the conditions in which my students attempt to learn, I'm regularly reminded of sitting with my daughter at an orientation offered by the college wherein she would soon begin freshmen classes. The speaker cautioned in-coming students: "You should not work more than 10 hours per week so that you can excel academically."

My students, far less prepared for higher education than those sitting with my daughter and I, are facing yet another tuition rise, *concurrently* with the a decline in the most basic support services afforded them (our Library, our Writing Center). And in the interest of "*efficiency*", faculty who teach developmental reading, writing, math, and ESL have been directed to replace the assessment test in writing (CATW) with an algorithm in order to determine student placement

My colleague in Social Science, Lorraine Cohen, presented testimony to the NY State Budget Forum that many faculty and Department Chairs who teach developmental skills and ESL find the algorithm to be inadequate for accurately placing students. As a member of the Natural Science faculty, I have experienced the truth of her testimony: students unable to learn biological concepts because of language insufficiency.

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**Sarah E. Durand, PhD**

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## TESTIMONY OF THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS/CUNY

### NYS STATE BUDGET FORUM IN MANHATTAN

FEBRUARY 29, 2020

Delivered by Dr. Barbara Bowen, President

Good afternoon, senators. Thank you for holding this hearing and for giving so many of us the opportunity to testify.

The members of the PSC see and appreciate the efforts each of you has made, especially this year, to prioritize increasing State funding for CUNY. But my message today is that even the increases currently under discussion in Albany, such as \$50 million to narrow the TAP Gap at CUNY and SUNY, are nowhere near enough. The TAP Gap at CUNY alone is \$80 million, and growing. The gap in unmet mandatory cost increases at CUNY is another \$126 million. \$50 million for the TAP Gap, split between CUNY and SUNY, while it is \$50 million more than we saw last year, will not alleviate the current budget emergency at CUNY.

The only way to cover even the bare-bones operating costs at CUNY, which serves tens of thousands of students in Manhattan, is to insist that New York State increase revenue by raising taxes on the very rich and abandon the arbitrary, cruel and regressive 2% spending cap. Unless those two fundamental State policies are changed, the legislature will continue to be in the position of merely managing austerity. Your role will be to further divide and subdivide a dwindling economic pie to attempt to meet the urgent unmet needs we are hearing about today.

We elected you to do better than that. We elected you to stand up for a progressive agenda for New York, and you cannot do that unless you expose and defeat the State's fiscal policy of unforced austerity. You have shown that you have the courage and the power to challenge other entrenched policies—on rent laws, gay marriage and more. Now show the same political will and change the most consequential policy of all, on the budget.

The arbitrary 2% spending cap is especially damaging to CUNY. First, it fails to account for increases in enrollment. Second, it includes tuition increases as part of increased State spending. That is clearly unfair. And third, it assumes that the entire amount booked for tuition increases will be realized, when that is not the case. So CUNY gets triply hurt by a policy that has nothing to do with economics and everything to do with politics. The result is that even the most basic needs are not covered: library hours, chairs in classrooms, staff in tutoring centers, soap in bathrooms. We are in a constant state of crisis.

Anything other than new, progressive taxation and an end to the 2% spending cap will amount to an attack on CUNY's half-million students.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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**TESTIMONY OF THE  
CUNY UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE  
BEFORE THE  
WESTCHESTER STATE SENATE DELEGATION  
2020-21 EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL  
ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
February 29, 2020**

Good afternoon, my name is Timothy Hunter. I am the Chairperson of the CUNY University Student Senate (USS) and the student Trustee on the City University's Board of Trustees. Founded in 1972 with the mission of preserving the accessibility, affordability, and excellence of higher education within the CUNY, the organization is charged with protecting the rights of the student body and promoting the general welfare of its student constituents and the University. The USS delegates are responsible for the representative governance of the 500,000 students of the 25 CUNY campuses.

**A COLLEGE DEGREE IS THE NEW HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA**

New York State must provide New Yorkers with access to a college education degree that will help them succeed in life and benefit the economy at large. A college degree is necessary for any individual who intends to thrive in our economy. Research from Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce shows that for millions of growing jobs in the US, many of them will require more than just a high school diploma. The data from the Center shows that

- 35 percent of job openings will require at least a bachelor's degree
- 30 percent will require some college or an associate, and
- 36 percent of jobs will require education beyond high school<sup>1</sup>

In a statement, the former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, while pleading for making college more affordable, said that "America's students and families need, and the nation's economic strength will depend on, a higher education system that helps all students succeed. College is more important – but more expensive – than ever before."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020." *CEW Georgetown*, 31 Jan. 2018, [cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/recovery-job-growth-and-education-requirements-through-2020/](http://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/recovery-job-growth-and-education-requirements-through-2020/)

<sup>2</sup> "Fact Sheet: Focusing Higher Education on Student Success." *Fact Sheet: Focusing Higher Education on Student Success | U.S. Department of Education*, 27 July 2015, [www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/fact-sheet-focusing-higher-education-student-success](http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/fact-sheet-focusing-higher-education-student-success).

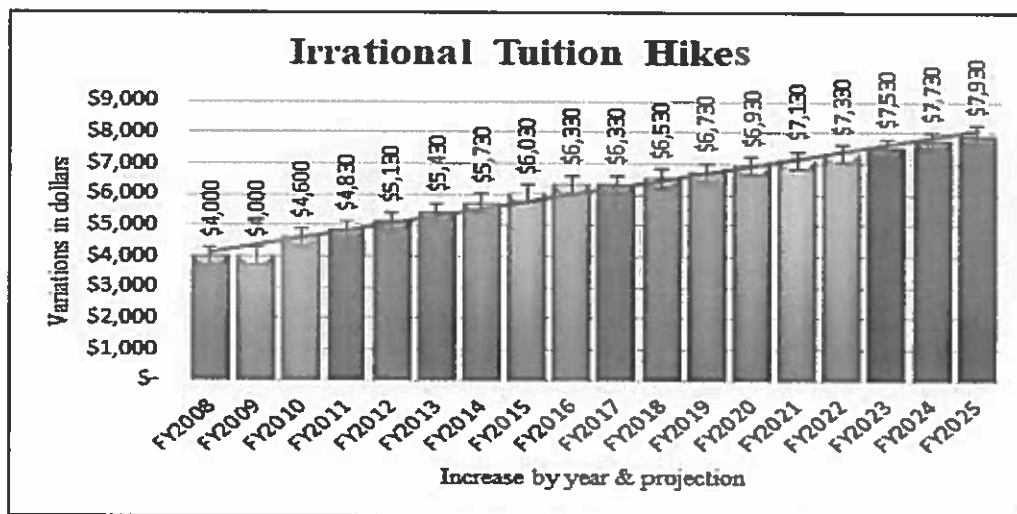


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### SUNY 2020: IRRATIONAL TUITION HIKES

In 2011, Governor Cuomo and the State Legislature passed NY SUNY 2020.<sup>3</sup> Dubbed the new 'rational tuition program' for SUNY and CUNY, it enacted increased tuition annually at SUNY and CUNY by \$300 per year for five years. Initially, the Governor and State Legislature promised the increased tuition would go towards enhancing student services; less crowded classrooms, more academic mentoring, and more counseling and advising available for students. In addition, SUNY 2020 included an important provision known as the "maintenance of effort," which stipulated that the legislature would not reduce SUNY's or CUNY's general operating funds in following budgets. This was to ensure that increased tuition would not be offset by decreased state support. However, the "maintenance of effort" provision excludes certain mandatory, predictable cost increases. Actions by the legislature to amend this underscores that the SUNY2020 law does not keep whole the systems' general operating funds, consistent with the law's stated intention.<sup>4</sup>

A recent report by the New York Public Interest Research Group [conservatively] estimates the tuition price tag for SUNY 2020 has cost students \$2.5 billion in additional public college tuition payments. While the promise from the state was that students would have to cough up more money every year to enhance student services on their campus; the report highlights that, in fact, did not occur. Instead, the increased tuition went to fill in state budget gaps.<sup>5</sup>



Due to stagnant state support, student groups and faculty unions alike have shared stories at various hearings throughout the state, citing library hour cuts, limited course offerings which further delay

<sup>3</sup> Governor Cuomo Signs NYSUNY 2020 Legislation, see: <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-signs-nysuny-2020-legislation>

<sup>4</sup> News Release, NYPIRG ESTIMATES TUITION PRICE TAG FOR SUNY 2020: STUDENTS PAY \$2.5 BILLION IN ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COLLEGE TUITION PAYMENTS, see: [https://www.nypirg.org/pubs/201910/higher\\_ed\\_news\\_merged\\_10-22-19\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.nypirg.org/pubs/201910/higher_ed_news_merged_10-22-19_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*



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students from graduating on time, and hiring freezes across the board, to name a few. While tuition has gone up more than 42% since 2011, it's clear the money is not being invested in student support services, but instead, footing the bill where the state refuses to. On June 24, 2019, at the final Board of Trustees meeting where CUNY's budget was up for a vote (including another tuition hike), CUNY's CFO, Michael Sapienza stated that the budget required senior colleges to set aside funds for future labor costs from collective bargaining contracts.<sup>6</sup> Despite the recent contract for faculty being finalized and the decision being made to use tuition revenue for labor reserves, adjuncts, who teach more than half the courses at CUNY, will still receive meager pay.

Cassandra Murray, an adjunct from Hunter College and Graduate Teaching Fellow at the CUNY Graduate Center for the past three years, details her experience below:

*"There are various issues I could address, including consistently broken and even dangerous facilities, underfunded and completely unfunded learning centers and labs, overcrowded classes, lack of books and supplies, class cancellations, and technological shortfalls (all of which occurs as CUNY tuition continues to rise). I have been committed to teaching at CUNY for a long time now... yet, I am on the verge of quitting. The state, city, and the CUNY administration together have made it nearly impossible for me to continue on in a meaningful career that I love because I literally cannot afford to survive in the city in which I work, and there appears to be little hope of obtaining a living wage in the future. I currently reside in an apartment with poor living conditions, but I can't afford to move to a better apartment given the high rents in NYC. The cost of living in NYC combined with the student loans I have accumulated from attending SUNY and CUNY schools keeps me up at night and on edge throughout the day, thus working for CUNY also takes a toll on my physical and mental health."*

The Executive proposal would authorize a tuition rate increase of no more than \$200 per year through AY 2024-25. Students should not have to pay more money to sit in labor reserves, or fill in holes where the state refuses to. Students in NYC are already food insecure.<sup>7</sup> They are already housing insecure.<sup>8</sup> Our students cannot afford another round of tuition hikes.

- **We reject the renewal of NY SUNY 2020 and ask the State Legislature to oppose any new tuition hikes through AY 2024-25.**
- **We ask that the Legislature consider freezing tuition at senior colleges and ultimately move to a free CUNY.**

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<sup>6</sup> CUNY Board of Trustees 2019 Archive, see: <https://www.cuny.edu/about/trustees/meetings-of-the-board/meeting-broadcasts/video-archive-for-2019/>

<sup>7</sup> NY Times, Tuition or Dinner? Nearly Half of College Students Surveyed in a New Report Are Going Hungry, see: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/02/nyregion/hunger-college-food-insecurity.html>

<sup>8</sup> Young Invincibles, "I KNOW WHAT'S AT STAKE" How Homelessness Impacts College Success in New York City, see: [https://younginvincibles.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/YoungInvincibles\\_Homelessness\\_College\\_Success\\_NYC.pdf](https://younginvincibles.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/YoungInvincibles_Homelessness_College_Success_NYC.pdf)



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### **INCREASED TUITION MEANS INCREASING THE TAP GAP**

For students who receive full Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) awards, CUNY is required legally to cap tuition at the maximum TAP award level (\$5,165). The difference between CUNY's full-time tuition (\$6,930) and the charge to students who receive state financial aid is covered by a TAP waiver. To reiterate, instead of students paying the difference, individual colleges eat the difference, resulting in a widening gap known as the TAP gap. This corrosive gap has fiscally squeezed the university. Due to the TAP gap, most campuses now offer limited course offerings, prolonging the time it would take for a student to graduate, cuts to library hours, cuts to ethnic studies, crowded classrooms, and the university is ever-increasing its reliance on part-time, poorly paid adjuncts.

At John Jay College of Criminal Justice, budget cuts to the Africana Studies Department mean that in the past six years the department has been unable to hire new faculty members. Roughly ten years ago, the department had eleven full time faculty members. Since then, the Africana Studies Department has had a steady increase in students. Their minors program more than doubled and they serve over 1,000 students. Yet, they only have six full time faculty members. These faculty members not only teach but create programming and advise their students. As a result, the Africana Studies Department is unable to offer all the courses displayed in their course catalog.

In addition, the Department of Africana Studies at Lehman college will have to offer a significantly reduced amount of courses for the Spring 2020 semester. The department just finalized their Spring schedule and cited a reduction in \$20,000 in their adjunct budget. This means the department cannot pay for the same amount of classes that were offered last Spring. To provide additional context; Lehman's Department of Africana Studies had been able to offer numerous courses on Saturdays in Spring 2019, however, they will only be able to offer one class this Spring. This is harmful for many students, who cite lack of course offerings being the reason why they cannot fulfill their requirements in a timely manner, and delays them for graduating.

All TAP students receive a tuition credit based on their income- with higher-income students receiving the lowest credit and lower-income students, who receive a maximum TAP award, getting the highest credit to fully cover the cost of their tuition. It is key to note that CUNY has significantly more TAP recipients receiving the full grant based on a family income at or below the poverty line. Sixty percent of CUNY students report an annual household income of less than \$30,000.<sup>9</sup> While SUNY has more of a total number of recipients who receive TAP since the university has approximately forty percent more students than CUNY, SUNY students receive significantly less in grant amounts on average. Next year the TAP gap at CUNY is estimated at 80 million, SUNY is estimated at 70 million. So despite having 40 percent more students, the gap is about 13 percent greater at CUNY. Again the explanation is the far

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<sup>9</sup> CUNY Student Experience Survey 2016, see:

[https://www.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/oir/institutional/surveys/2016\\_SES\\_Highlights\\_Updated\\_web\\_ready.pdf](https://www.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/oir/institutional/surveys/2016_SES_Highlights_Updated_web_ready.pdf)



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greater numbers of students enrolled at CUNY at or below the poverty line. To emphasize our point; the TAP gap forces colleges to have to make up the difference between tuition and the maximum TAP award to ensure that the poorest students don't pay tuition. This means that schools, particularly at CUNY who serve the poorest students in the state, have to eat about two grand per poor student. It's not about the overall number of TAP recipients, but about where the greatest needs are.

### **OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS ARE VITAL SERVICES FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE STUDENTS IN NEW YORK STATE**

Opportunity Programs at CUNY are vital to support the inclusion and educational success of underrepresented groups in higher education.<sup>10</sup> These programs include the College Discovery (CD) and Percy Ellis Sutton Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK) opportunity programs, and the Single Stop College Initiative. CUNY has been a national leader in pioneering innovative programs to expand education access for students from underrepresented communities by pairing them individually with intensive support to keep them on track and help them graduate. SEEK and CD are the forerunners. The Governor's 2021 Executive proposal maintains prior year funding for various opportunity programs. While we are grateful for the steady funding from the Governor's budget, however, with additional state money, CUNY can have more students served under these successful programs. **We request that the Legislature provide additional funding for these vital services to be expanded.**

SEEK and CD, with it's visionary model, paved the way to more recent initiatives, such as CUNY's highly successful Accelerated Study in Associate Program (ASAP), which has been nationally recognized due to its high graduation and retention rate gains. The program helps students earn associate degrees within three years by providing a range of financial, academic, and personal support including comprehensive and personalized advisement, career counseling, tutoring, waivers for tuition and mandatory fees, MetroCards, and additional financial assistance to defray the cost of textbooks.<sup>11</sup> A recent study by MDRC, a nonprofit research group, looked into three Ohio community colleges that adopted CUNY's ASAP and nearly doubled three-year graduation rates while increasing transfers to four-year colleges by 50 percent.<sup>12</sup> The data is clear; ASAP works. While the program is city instituted, last year the state had provided additional funds for ASAP. However, in his 2021 Executive proposal, the Governor cut \$2.5 million of the additional funds. **We request the Legislature restores \$2.5 million back to ASAP, which is a nationally recognized model with a highly successful track record.**

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<sup>10</sup> CUNY Office of Special Programs, see: <https://www.cuny.edu/current-students/student-affairs/special-programs/>

<sup>11</sup> CUNY ASAP, see: <http://www1.cuny.edu/sites/asap/>

<sup>12</sup> MDRC, Ohio Programs Based on CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) Nearly Double Three-Year Graduation Rates, Increase Transfers to Four-Year Colleges, see: <https://www.mdrc.org/news/press-release/ohio-programs-based-cuny-s-accelerated-study-associate-programs-asap-nearly>



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### **EXPANSION CAPITAL MATCHING PROGRAM**

CUNY has not had a five-year capital plan since 2008. While last year's budget included \$834 million in critical maintenance, no new revenue had been approved for the construction of new buildings. In addition, CUNY had not received significant increased revenue for critical maintenance projects, leading to ceilings leaking and bathrooms in disrepair. At the CUNY Board of Trustees annual Manhattan Borough Hearing, on the topic of the 2019 CUNY budget, Susan Semel, a professor at the City College of New York, stated in her testimony that her building in CCNY, the North Academic Center, "is in a constant state of decay," with elevators and escalators not working properly, soap and toilet paper often being unavailable in the bathrooms, bathrooms flooding and the cleaning staff being overwhelmed due to being "cut to the bone."<sup>13</sup>

Recently, Sakia Fletcher, the Student Government President of Medgar Evers, cited temporary portable trailers that were installed roughly twenty years ago, still being used for classes till this very day. *"What do these "temporary" portable trailers represent? They represent 20 plus years of disappointment and failure. These portable trailers represent educational racism and segregation that exists in CUNY. They remind students of color that the state is not willing to invest in the educational infrastructure expansion of black students. Ultimately, the Medgar Evers College portable classroom trailers represent the State's blatant disregard and neglect in finding capital investments at predominantly black institutions in New York."*

This year, the Governor's proposal includes an expansion capital matching program that includes \$200 million for CUNY for a 2:1 strategic needs capital matching program that would require individual campuses contribute \$1 for every \$2 invested by the State. We applaud the Governor for including funds for new capital projects, however, we are concerned for schools that aren't as equipped to fundraise. Schools like York College and Medgar Evers, with higher populations of black students, generally fundraise less than schools with higher populations with caucasian and asian students. While schools like Queens College and Baruch College may flourish, other campuses will suffer. In one of the largest urban universities in the world, equity must be prioritized; campuses with lack of fundraising abilities should not be overlooked, but supported by state funding.

### **INCREASE BASE AID FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

Community colleges educate and prepare students for the workforce in addition to creating a foundation for students to transition to senior colleges. Maintaining and funding them are vital to student success; state education law mandates that the state shall pay 40 percent of the operating costs of these campuses, however, the state is not meeting its obligation. Instead, CUNY community college students are paying the majority of operating costs at their campuses.

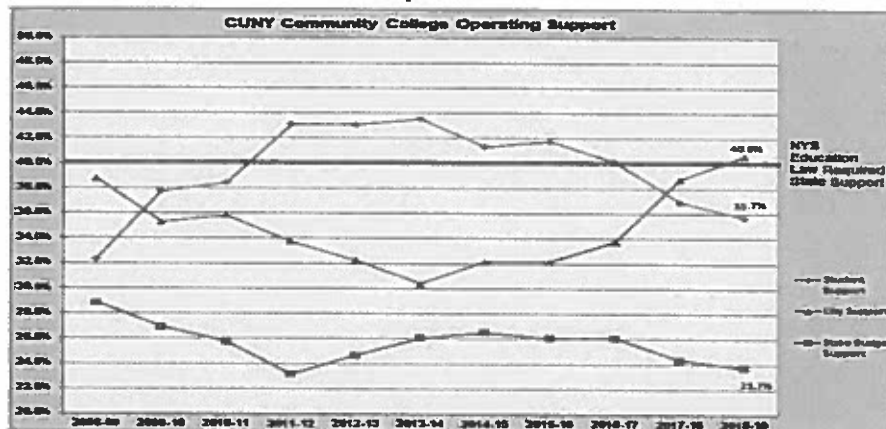
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<sup>13</sup> Baruch College Ticker, *Stirring testimonies electrify CUNY Board of Trustees meeting*, see: <https://theticker.org/archive/stirring-testimonies-electrify-cuny-board-of-trustees-meeting>



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Graph from NYSUT



As soon from the graph above, from 2008-9 to 2018-19, CUNY community colleges paid an increase from 32.3 percent to 40.6 percent, while the states share decreased from 28.9 percent to 23.7 percent.

The Executive Budget maintains base operating aid for community colleges at \$2,947 per full-time equivalent (FTE) student, the same as SFY 2019-20. However, the 98 percent funding floor that was included in the SFY 2019-20 Enacted Budget is not continued. This results in a decrease of \$3.6 million in base aid from SFY 2019-2020, which the Governor attributes to declines in enrollment. **We ask the Legislature to include an increase in community college funding by \$250 per student FTE and re-establish the 98 percent funding floor at the 2018-19 level.**

While we are happy College Discovery was not cut, we are discouraged to see funding for child care centers at community colleges reduced from \$902,000 to \$813,100. According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, parents with dependent children drop out of college at a higher rate than any other demographic, with only 33 percent of students with children obtaining a degree or certificate within six years.<sup>14</sup> Seventeen percent of CUNY's degree-seeking students at community colleges and 11 percent of students at senior colleges are parents.<sup>15</sup> **We are requesting that the final budget restores the cuts made to child care centers at CUNY community colleges.**

### REFORM THE DREAM ACT

We thank the Legislature, again, for passing the Jose Peralta DREAM Act last year. As with any new program, there are glitches that occur in the beginning that should be addressed. Overall, 47,000 people in New York City are eligible to benefit from the DREAM Act, the bulk of whom reside in Queens.<sup>16</sup> So far,

<sup>14</sup> Institute for Women's Policy Research, Student Parent Success Initiative, see: <https://iwpr.org/issue/employment-education-economic-change/student-parent-success-initiative/#lates%20publications>

<sup>15</sup> City Council Response to State Budget: [https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2019/04/Fiscal-2020-Preliminary-Budget-Response\\_FINAL.pdf](https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2019/04/Fiscal-2020-Preliminary-Budget-Response_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, see: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/NYS-Dream-Act-Fact-Sheet-2019.pdf>



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it is unknown how much financial aid has been awarded to undocumented students since its initial roll out. HESC President Guillermo Linares stated that data on how many students have applied is yet to be available.

While we don't have those numbers yet, we do know students who have been denied due to the programs rigid requirements. Enrique Pena, a Queens College student and an immigration activist who was in Albany at the time the DREAM act was passed, is one of the students who have been rejected. *"In order to qualify for the DREAM Act, students must have attended high school for a minimum of two years. However, I was in high school for a year and a half, so I did not qualify. This unnecessary, rigid requirement has created a barrier for me to attend CUNY, which has been, time after time, touted as the most affordable university in the nation. But if you're a dreamer who, for some reason, did not qualify for the DREAM Act, like myself, then CUNY isn't affordable by any means."*

- **We ask the high school requirement be amended from 2 years of high school needed to a high school diploma in the U.S., needed.**
- **We ask that the DREAM Act be amended or that stand alone legislation is introduced so that students can receive payment and scholarships from student activity fees.**

### **OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

The Governor's proposal included maintained levels at \$4 million for Open Educational Resources (OER) at CUNY. We applaud the Governor for maintaining this crucial program, which is paving the way for a more affordable college experience for many students. OER are free online textbooks that professors adopt into their curriculum. Instead of working to pay for hundreds of dollars for books, students can focus on studying with their online textbook, free of charge! Majority of all CUNY campuses have a designated OER Coordinator working with faculty to adopt the online curriculum into their classrooms. Student governments have passed resolutions calling for faculty to actively seek out lessons on how to transition into OER. **This program is working and will benefit CUNY in the long run.**

### **EXCELSIOR SCHOLARSHIP:**

The CUNY USS, on behalf of the CUNY students, commend Governor Cuomo's decision to expand the Excelsior Scholarship so more students can attend public university for free. As stated in the 2021 budget, under this proposal, the income threshold would increase to \$135,000 in Academic Year (AY) 2020-21 and \$150,000 in AY 2021-22. This decision will allow students – middle-class students and their families – to spend less money on getting a college degree. However, the issue of college affordability remains since the vast majority of students from low-income families who need the program still cannot take advantage of this opportunity for various reasons regarding the requirements barriers.





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- The Excelsior Scholarship required all applicants to comply with a yearly successful 30-credits requirement (15 credits per semester), which in itself constitutes a barrier when, in fact, just 18 percent of all CUNY students took at least 30 credits in 2016-17.<sup>17</sup>
- The Excelsior Scholarship only covers regular sessions such as spring and fall, but will not cover tuition for summer and winter, which does not give students room to fulfill the 30-credits requirement.<sup>18</sup> Nontraditional students, like most at CUNY, are forced to take 15 credits per semester in order to fulfill the 30 credit per AY requirement. This is not feasible for most. **We recommend allowing Excelsior to cover summer and winter courses, so students can maintain their jobs, families, and duties in addition to taking classes.**
- The Excelsior Scholarship does not cover food, housing, travel for school-related activities, books, other school materials, or anything that can allow a student to stay on track academically.
- **Excelsior does not help low-income students.**
  - The poorest students at CUNY already receive financial aid from Pell and TAP to cover full costs of tuition (Pell can give additional money to pay for hidden costs like textbooks and travel). Excelsior is a last dollar scholarship that only goes to students who have tuition balances left after exhausting all other aid.
- **Excelsior benefits students from families that are “upper” low-income and middle-income.**
  - Students from families with taxable incomes of between \$80,000 and \$125,000 are in the sweetest spot to receive the scholarship. At \$80,000+ in taxable income, families generally phase out of eligibility for Pell or TAP. For these students, Excelsior flips the script from a full tuition bill to none.<sup>19</sup> Data from HESC reported that in its initial year, Excelsior provided significantly more benefits to students at colleges serving majority middle-income and near-middle-income students than colleges serving majority low-income students.<sup>20</sup>
- **Excelsior hardly benefits community college students.**
  - Community college students barely reap the benefits of Excelsior, given that only 1.7% of students were awarded in 2017-18, compared to 4.6% of students at senior colleges.

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<sup>17</sup> Silberstein, Rachel. "New York's Excelsior Scholarships Rise 20 Percent, but Tough Requirements Exclude Many." *Times Union*, Times Union, 16 Sept. 2019, [www.timesunion.com/news/article/Excelsior-Scholarships-rise-20-percent-but-tough-14431051.php](http://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Excelsior-Scholarships-rise-20-percent-but-tough-14431051.php).

<sup>18</sup> "Excelsior Scholarship Program." *NYS Higher Education Services Corporation - The Excelsior Scholarship*, [www.hesc.ny.gov/pay-for-college/financial-aid/types-of-financial-aid/nys-grants-scholarships-awards/the-excelsior-scholarship.html](http://www.hesc.ny.gov/pay-for-college/financial-aid/types-of-financial-aid/nys-grants-scholarships-awards/the-excelsior-scholarship.html).

<sup>19</sup> The Ups and Downs of Excelsior Scholarship's Freshman Year and What Comes Next, see: <https://www.gothamgazette.com/columnists/other/130-opinion/8025-the-ups-and-downs-of-excelsior-scholarship-s-freshman-year-and-what-comes-next>

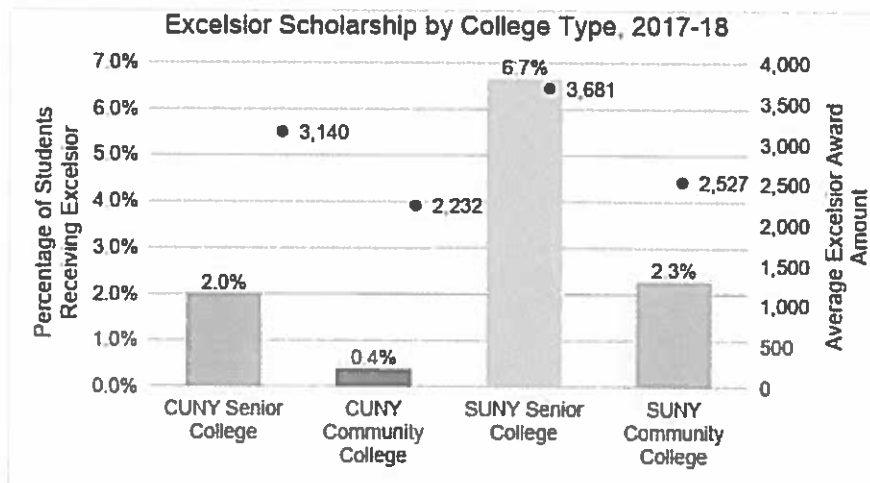
<sup>20</sup> Excelsior Scholarship Recipients and Dollars by College Code: Beginning 2017, see: <https://data.ny.gov/Education/Excelsior-Scholarship-Recipients-and-Dollars-by-Co/c7f2-hjqd>



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This is in part due to the rigid 30 credits per year requirement. Many community college students do not qualify to make full-time attendance, continuous enrollment, and deliver 30 credits each year.

- **Excelsior hardly benefits CUNY students.**
  - According to an article published in the Gotham Gazette, in 2017-18, the 18 CUNY colleges enrolled a 16.3% share of Excelsior scholarship recipients, with the balance of 83.7% of recipients attending SUNY colleges, even though CUNY students comprise 38.8% of the state's public student enrollment. The number of recipients is small at SUNY but minuscule at CUNY.<sup>21</sup>



Source: Gotham Gazette

- **We encourage the Governor and State Legislature to reconsider some of the requirements such as the 30-credits yearly, non-consideration for summer and winter classes, and part-time students, as well.**

### ENHANCING SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

We appreciate the steady funding for CUNY LEADS in the Governor's proposal, which is a free and unique academic and career program for students with disabilities that offers job seeking/placement assistance, interview preparation, academic advisement, and more. However, CUNY has not received an increase in its State funding for key reasonable accommodations and support services since 1993-1994. Over the last 25 years, the enrollment of CUNY students with disabilities has increased by more than 50 percent, while due to inflation, the purchasing power of CUNY's disability services base allocation has eroded by more than 50 percent.

<sup>21</sup> As Cuomo Proposes Excelsior Scholarship Expansion, 6 Things to Know About the Program, see: <https://www.gothamgazette.com/opinion/9090-cuomo-proposes-excelsior-scholarship-college-expansion-6-things-to-know>



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CUNY LEADS is beneficial and should be expanded considering 70 percent of participants achieve competitive employment within 18 months of graduation. The program currently has the capacity to serve only 2,000 students with disabilities. According to the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at CUNY, an additional \$1,000,000 would enable CUNY LEADS to secure additional advisors and job developers. Job developers can match employers seeking to diversify their workforces with educated, prepared and screened candidates with disabilities.

- **Additional funding for CUNY LEADS would double the number of eligible students served to 4,000, drawing from the University's more than 11,000 students with disabilities, including the growing number of veterans with disabilities.**

**2020 NYS Senate Manhattan State Budget Forum  
Saturday, February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

**Testimony of  
DAVID M. GERWIN  
Professor, Department of Secondary Education, Queens College/CUNY  
Queens College PSC CUNY Chapter Chair**

Thank you for this opportunity to address the New York State budget and CUNY. From my perspective at Queens College, what has gone on over the years is a hollowing out of CUNY, a slow fade of our ability to teach and conduct research, and a steep decline in all services we offer students. The important point I want to stress is that this decline can be invisible from outside. We still accept applications and enroll students and hold graduation. The college still occupies 80 acres with a view of Manhattan across the East River. From the outside it appears that Queens College is open for business as usual.

But this perception that all is well and proceeding normally at Queens College is lie. The relentless budget cutting of the past decade has left us a shell. What I want to describe today is how it looks like we are a functioning college, but we have been crossing red lines that need to be public knowledge, not private pain.

This fall Queens faced a dire budget shortfall. One step that administration took, immediately, was to raise the profit margin on adjunct taught classes, by mandating that classes taught by adjuncts require 12 students to run, and not 10. This sounds trivial, but not if your class is cancelled and you simply fall further away from graduation. Full time faculty were told that instead of deciding between running a course with low-enrollment or cancelling it, faculty could “volunteer” to keep the course running, but even though it would meet at all the regular times of a class, it would be converted into independent studies so you could get only partial credit at best for teaching. This would allow the college to assign you an additional class the next semester, squeezing you and allowing less time per student, or for research.

If you are a student you just think your class has been cancelled and that is the way it is. And sometimes it is just a cancelled class. But often it is not. This year, in planning for the spring semester in the face of horrific budget shortfall, Queens crossed a red line. The Provost asked the English department to cut 800 seats out of 1000 planned, in English 152w/162w. These are mid-level writing intensive courses needed by sophomores and juniors to move along towards graduation. Every seat would be filled, so cutting them was not about enrollment. It was about budget. The students taking the class would generally be paying flat rate tuition rather than enrolling by the course. In other words, the college would not lose any tuition dollars by cutting the small, writing intensive English sections and shoving students into larger lectures. But it would transform what it means to be a Queens College student. Generally students who pay full tuition are able to take the classes they need for graduation, perhaps having to wait a semester for a seat, but in either fall or spring they can take their classes. This also means TAP students can graduate too. But if 800 of 1000 seats are cut, leaving only 200 seats,

your full tuition is a ticket to a lottery drawing in which you have a 1 in 5 chance of getting the course you need for moving towards graduation. Of course, you can always enroll in that course over the summer or in a winter session, when full tuition will not cover that seat, and the college will be happy to offer it. This would fundamentally change the nature of Queens College from a place where you can graduate with flat rate tuition or TAP aid, into a "PAY TO PLAY" school, where only those who can afford to "supplement" their flat rate with summer or winter courses will get the classes they need.

To a student or a parent this is invisible. It is their bad luck a class got cancelled. But it is the result of planned austerity by Governor Cuomo that, I'm sorry to say, the NYS Assmebly and Senate have abetted in every budget since 2008. The saddest part of this who sorry episode is that Queens would only save \$68,000 in a \$138 million budget. But the budget has been ripped to shreds, and the Provost needed those \$68,000. I want to report that extra funds were found in the sweep of the 2019 budget and that disaster was averted. That cut did not take place. But our President and Provost were willing to take that step, and they did not stand up in public and holler, or go to the papers. And students do not know this happened.

They do not know that there are only 4 mental health counselors for 22,000 students, only that it is nearly impossible to get seen. They do not know that Queens has lost three people who they have named "the Registrar" in the last 10 months, or that the current "Registrar" is a very nice man who has worked in Admissions for years and does not have the qualifications or background, although they may face delays in having they transcripts stamped graduated. They do not know that when a ceiling leaked and a rug got moldy and was removed to be cleaned and asbestos was discovered, there was no possibility of asbestos abatement unless the department would divert \$5000 from academic or grant funding to cover the abatement. The college only has money to throw a rug over the problem. They only know that no clock on Queens College campus tells the correct time, not that we are down to six Buidling and Grounds staff for an 80 acre campus, and on Thursday only two of the six B&G staff were on campus. They do not really understand the difference between full-time and adjunct faculty, but with 2000 student majors in Psychology, full-time faculty only teach about 10-15% of the courses offered in their department.

No one has bulldozed our campus, knocked over the buildings, shuttered the library, or barred the gates. It looks like a campus. And students are coming and faculty are teaching. A budget crisis that hollows out a campus from the inside is not as visible as one in which a bridge collapses. But that doesn't mean it is not a crisis, or that students, faculty, staff, and New York City's future are not being harmed.

Thank you for holding this hearing and allowing my testimony.



Testimony of:

Jennifer Tassler

Director of Policy and Programming

Associated Medical Schools of New York (AMSNY)

At the 2020 New York State Senate

Manhattan Budget Forum

February 29, 2020

3:00 pm

New York Academy of Medicine  
New York, New York



Good afternoon Chairwoman Krueger, Senators Benjamin, Hoylman, Jackson, Kavanaugh and Serrano. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on the Executive proposed budget for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2020-2021.

My name is Jennifer Tassler, Director of Policy and Programming at the Associated Medical Schools of New York (AMSNY), the consortium of the 17 public and private medical schools in New York State. Six of the 17 medical schools are located in Manhattan. AMSNY works in partnership with its members to advance biomedical research, diversity in medical school and the physician workforce and high quality and cost-efficient care.

I am here today to tell you more about the AMSNY budget priorities, including funding for the Diversity in Medicine Program and Scholarship; ECRIP and NYSTEM, which are research programs funded through the Department of Health; and NYFIRST, an economic development program to recruit and retain top scientists in New York State (NYS).

#### **The Need for Increased Diversity in the Physician Workforce**

AMSNY strongly believes in the importance of a multifaceted strategy to meet the growing demand for physicians in New York, while simultaneously tackling the current need to decrease access issues in underserved areas. AMSNY's Diversity in Medicine program was developed with these two objectives in mind.

In the coming years, the need for access to quality care will increase, especially the aging of the baby boom generation. To meet this demand, enrollment in New York State's medical schools increased 19% between 2006 and 2016. We now educate more than 11,100 students each year – a number that has begun to grow significantly with the opening of New York State's 17<sup>th</sup> medical school in the summer of 2019.

**However, changing demographics demand more than increasing class sizes or opening new schools; it also demands training a more diverse workforce.**

The evidence is increasingly incontrovertible that a diverse and culturally competent workforce will improve the nation's health disparities and, as such, the nation's health (Jackson, 2014). Doctors who speak their patients' languages and understand the larger context of culture, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation and socioeconomic conditions are better equipped to address the needs of specific populations and the health disparities among them.

Previous studies demonstrate that physicians from racial or ethnic backgrounds underrepresented in medicine are more likely to practice primary care and practice in underserved areas while treating a larger number of minority patients, irrespective of income. Furthermore, when given a choice, racial and ethnic minority patients are more likely to select physicians who share their racial and ethnic backgrounds and report greater satisfaction and having received higher quality care (Kington, 2001).



As such, increasing the number of students from underrepresented<sup>1</sup> in medicine populations (URIMs) in New York State is vital for the state's health.

### **AMSNY's Diversity in Medicine Program and Scholarship**

While Black/African comprise 31% of the New York State population, they account for approximately 17% of the state's medical students and approximately 12% of physicians practicing in the state.

Since 1985, AMSNY has supported an array of pipeline programs across the state that expand the pool of URIM students choosing careers in health and medicine. These programs provide academic enrichment and support to students from educationally and/or economically underserved backgrounds. These programs provide vital opportunities that a majority of participants would not have had due to cultural and financial barriers.

#### *SFY2020-2021 Proposed Funding of the Diversity in Medicine Program*

The New York State Senate and Assembly have been long time supporters of these programs. When necessary, the Legislature rejected the Executive's proposed health workforce "pools" and ensured a line item appropriation for the programs. When possible, the Legislature restored cuts proposed by the Executive Budget. Despite the Legislature's efforts, however, the Diversity in Medicine program was reduced by 22.5% in the enacted FY 2017-18 budget, resulting in a lower level of funding that was maintained in the SFY 2018-19 budget. This cut forced AMSNY to reduce the number of students in the program and to discontinue funding one program in its entirety.

**The original SFY 2020-21 Executive budget eliminated all funding for these programs but was restored to SFY2019-2020 levels in the Governor's 30-Day Amendments. We are deeply appreciative of the Legislature's efforts on behalf of the Program in advocating that funding be restored and we urge you to ensure that this funding remains at \$1.244 million in the enacted SFY 2020-21 budget.**

#### *Core Diversity Programs*

AMSNY oversees six core programs as part of its Diversity in Medicine grant that provide underrepresented students a pathway to medical school.

Two of these programs are located at schools in Manhattan. AMSNY supports an academic learning center at CUNY College of Medicine (CUNY) – a seven-year BS/MD program that students enter directly from high school – and a program at the City College of New York that links junior and senior baccalaureate students with NIH-funded researchers to prepare them for careers in medicine or the basic sciences. These programs provide much needed academic support and opportunity to underrepresented New York City students becoming physicians and scientists.

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<sup>1</sup> "Underrepresented in medicine means those racial and ethnic populations that are underrepresented in the medical profession relative to their numbers in the general population." AAMC's Executive Council, June 2003





AMSNY also oversees four post-baccalaureate programs at the Jacobs School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, University at Buffalo, SUNY Upstate, the Renaissance School of Medicine at Stony Brook University and New York Medical College. Three of these programs also award Master's degrees to the students. These programs are unique – students must apply to a New York State medical school and be interviewed by the schools' admissions' committees. If the admissions committee believes the student would be a good addition to the school, provided they receive additional academic enrichment, the committee will recommend them to one of the four post-bac programs. If, upon completion of the post-baccalaureate program, the student meets the program and the referring school's requirements, they will automatically be accepted into the referring medical school.

As the attachment demonstrates, 93% of students who participate in AMSNY's post-baccalaureate program at the University at Buffalo enter medical school and 85% graduate. At the Master's degree post-baccalaureate programs at SUNY Upstate, Renaissance School of Medicine at Stony Brook and New York Medical College, 94% of the students enter medical school.

**Attached to this testimony are graphical analyses that demonstrate the success of our programs and the impact the proposed elimination of funding will have on the diversity of physicians in New York State.**

***For SFY 2020-21, we are urging that funding for these important programs remain at \$1.244 million.***

#### *Diversity in Medicine Scholarship Program*

The costs of applying to and attending medical school are staggering. Applying to a single school can cost between \$3,000 and \$8,000 and students are recommended to apply to at least 10 schools if not more. Tuition and fees can range between \$45,000 and \$70,000 in New York State with "hidden costs" (materials, books, licensing exam fees) running between \$5,000 to \$8,000.

Ten years ago, a national study found that more than 75% of medical school students came from the top 40% highest earning households. The cost of medical school has been escalating at double the rate of inflation ([Adashi, 2010](#)). A reexamination of medical school demographics nine years later found the number had barely changed – more than three quarters of American medical students are still from predominantly high-income and, typically, White households ([Youngclaus and Roskovensky, 2018](#)).

Most students require loans and scholarships to attend medical school, but this is disproportionately true for URIM students. These students on average receive six percent of the cost of medical education from their families compared to 20% for non-URIM students. They are also more likely to begin medical school with higher pre-medical school debt (i.e. debt related to their undergraduate education). In 2015, 35.8% of White matriculants had pre-medical school debt compared to 46.2% for American Indians, 46.3% for Latinos, and 62.1% for African Americans ([AAMC Diversity Facts and Figures](#)). A URIM student without scholarships can expect to graduate with \$250,000 or more in federal loans. With accruing interest, which can be as high



as seven percent, these same individuals may pay up two to three times their original loan amount ([AAMC Diversity Facts and Figures](#)).

In SFY2017-2018, AMSNY received a \$500,000 investment from New York State to launch the Diversity in Medicine scholarship program to help address the gap in physician diversity. The scholarship — indexed to the average cost of SUNY medical school tuition — helps students from backgrounds underrepresented in medicine by reducing the financial barriers to medical school enrollment.

Since SFY2017-18 AMSNY has awarded scholarships annually to 10 students who have completed one of the Diversity in Medicine post-baccalaureate programs. In return, the scholarship awardees commit to working for at least two years in underserved areas in New York State. This commitment extends to a maximum of four years of service for four years of scholarship funding.

**Last year, AMSNY was pleased to see that the Senate contributed to funding for the Scholarship Program and we urge you to do so again. We are asking the Legislature to continue funding the Diversity in Medicine Scholarship Program at \$500,000 which will fund 10 students in SFY2020-2021.**

## **Economic Development**

### ***NYFIRST***

Biomedical research and the intellectual property it generates — which can result in significant licensing deals with the biopharmaceutical sector and the launch of startup companies — is an important economic driver. The backbone of basic biomedical research is National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding, which supports research into the causes of, and treatments for, a wide range of diseases, including cancers, diabetes, neurodegenerative disorders like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases, cardiovascular disease and many more that both impair quality of life and cause significant economic burden. According to a 2018 U.S. Chamber of Commerce analysis, disease burden in the U.S. results in an annual 9.4 percent reduction in gross domestic product.

New York State is perennially the third-largest recipient of NIH funding, with \$2.9 billion awarded to New York academic institutions and private sector companies in 2019. Of that total, 67% was awarded to scientists at New York's 17 medical schools. These funds support research laboratories that effectively function as small businesses within the medical schools, with a Principal Investigator at its head, and typically 8-10 post-doctoral scientists, technicians and support staff. These small businesses can scale quite significantly as the research advances. As an example, a scientist at Columbia University Irving Medical Center, Dr. Rudolph Leibel, has grown his lab to more than 100 employees and well in excess of \$50 million in NIH funding. Importantly, that growth would not have occurred in New York State were it not for a relatively modest \$750,000 investment the State made in 2002, via the now-defunct NYSTAR Faculty Development Program. At that time, Dr. Leibel was prepared to accept an offer from a competing institution in Maryland; if not for the New York State grant, Dr. Leibel's research —



and the NIH grants and employees that it entails – would have relocated outside the state.

New York State investment in its life sciences sector, however, has not kept pace with other states. *As a result, those states making significant investments have more advanced startup ecosystems and have competitive advantages in their efforts to recruit and retain world-class scientific talent.*

In November 2019, Texas voters authorized a second \$3 billion investment in the Cancer Prevention Research Initiative of Texas (CPRIT). Texas research institutions drew upon the initial \$3 billion investment in CPRIT in 2007 to recruit out-of-state scientists, spending more than \$40 million in the first several years to recruit important researchers, many at New York State universities. One of those recruits, the immunotherapy scientist James Allison, was lured from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center to MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston with a \$10 million package. Dr. Allison subsequently went on to win the prestigious Lasker Prize and a Nobel Prize in 2018. More importantly, Dr. Allison's research has proven remarkably effective in fighting advanced cancers and has the potential to contribute significantly to next generation cancer treatments.

California, also recognizing the economic benefits of investing in bioscience, launched its \$3 billion California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) in 2004. An additional \$5.5 billion will likely be approved by voters through referendum in November 2020. In recent strategic planning, CIRM has recently shifted its focus to translation research – research that advances basic science towards the marketplace and the bedside. In addition, California has long supported its life sciences industry, providing seed and other funding to startup companies launching from its academic institutions. As a result, California has the most robust life sciences sector in the U.S., accruing \$8.7 billion in venture capital investment, with 3,249 life sciences companies employing nearly 300,000 people at an average wage of \$114,000 in 2017.

Many other states have followed similar paths: Massachusetts created its \$1.5 billion Massachusetts Life Sciences Center to drive basic research and grow its bioscience sector; Connecticut invested \$2.5 billion to grow its research ecosystem. Even states with relatively few major academic research institutions have made outsized investments that, on a per capita basis, are competitive with Texas, California and Massachusetts.

New York State has, on a more limited basis, demonstrated the value of these sorts of investments. The Empire Stem Cell Science (NYSTEM) program – which at \$600 million is modest relative to the states with which it is most competitive for scientific talent and NIH funding – has led to the development of important health breakthroughs and private sector investment.

- In 2019, Oscine Therapeutics launched based on NYSTEM-funded research by Steven Goldman, co-director of the University of Rochester Medical Center's (URMC) Center for Translational Neuromedicine. Oscine is the largest-ever investment in a URMC startup company, with VC funding from Sana Biotechnology – a new firm backed by Arch Venture Partners, Flagship Pioneering and F-Prime Capital Partners.



- BlueRock Therapeutics was launched in 2016 based on NYSTEM-funded research at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. BlueRock secured \$225 million in venture capital investment from Bayer and Versant Ventures. In 2019, BlueRock received a \$1 million investment from Empire State Development to build a neuroscience hub in New York City. Bayer recently announced it is acquiring BlueRock for approximately \$600 million.
- In 2019, Luxa Biotechnology – a joint venture between the Korean company Yuyang DNU and the Neural Stem Cell Institute – was launched to develop new treatments for macular degeneration based on NYSTEM-funded research by Sally Temple, co-founder of the Neural Stem Cell Institute in Rensselaer, NY.

#### *New York Fund for Innovation in Research & Scientific Talent (NYFIRST)*

New York State's initial investment of \$20 million in the NYFIRST program was a central part of its Life Sciences Initiative in 2017 and signaled the State's commitment to an increasingly important part of New York State's innovation economy. The NYFIRST program has already improved New York State's competitive position in recruiting and retaining world-class scientific talent, an essential component of the state's growing bioscience sector. But the important work of strengthening New York's life sciences workforce has only just begun; the State must continue to ensure our academic institutions and private sector have the scientific talent that drives new discoveries, technological innovation, entrepreneurship, product development and new company formation.

#### **Return on Investment**

NYFIRST leverages additional investments from academic institutions through a required 2:1 match. In the first cycle of NYFIRST funding, the medical schools exceeded the required match significantly, generating \$6.50 in capital expenditures and additional grant funding for every State dollar invested.

#### **Employment**

NYFIRST is a proven driver of life sciences employment. These are high wage jobs (averaging \$85,000 per year, exceeding the statewide average private sector wage) at institutions with deep historical roots in New York State. Given their complex infrastructures, their partnerships with other health care entities and their local communities, academic medical centers are stable employers over the long-term, and will continue to be an important component of the state economy for the foreseeable future, meaning that, in contrast to other economic development initiatives, there is little risk that state investments in NYFIRST will flow out of state and fail to provide in-state jobs. Given the requirements of the program, each NYFIRST recruitment or retention award will similarly generate significant and immediate employment. In its first cycle of funding, NYFIRST has enabled the recruitment of 13 scientists and support staff from outside New York State, with 40 new jobs in the first year and a projected 101 new jobs over the first three years.



## **NYFIRST Cycle 1**

The first cycle of NYFIRST funding, which was awarded in early 2018, demonstrates the program's significant return on investment, with rapid employment growth, an additional \$6.50 in economic activity for every State dollar invested and 36 patents currently held or pending.

### **Projected Employment**

- Number of employees recruited to New York from outside state: **13**
- Net new jobs (direct and indirect) created by NYFIRST recruitment in year 1: **43**
- Net new jobs (direct and indirect) created by NYFIRST recruitment in year 2: **27**
- Net new jobs (direct and indirect) created by NYFIRST recruitment in year 3: **31**
- Net new jobs (direct and indirect) created by NYFIRST recruitment in years 1-3: **101**
- Average salary of all jobs created by NYFIRST recruitment in years 1-3: **\$65,853**

### **Additional Grant Funding**

- Total additional grant funding (from National Institutes of Health and other federal and philanthropic sources) brought to New York State by principal recruits in years 1-3: **An estimated \$16.5 million**

### **Institutional Matching Funds**

- Total institutional matching funds in years 1-3: **An estimated \$17.5 million**

### **Return on Investment**

- Every dollar invested by New York State in NYFIRST results in an additional **\$6.50 in economic activity** through institutional capital investments and additional grant funding brought to New York State

### **Intellectual Property**

- Number of patents held and/or pending by NYFIRST recruits: **10**
- Number of patents held and/or pending by additional recruits: **26**
- Total number of patents held and/or pending as a result of NYFIRST awards: **36**

## **The Future of NYFIRST**

The second cycle of NYFIRST closed in mid-2019 and awards are likely to be announced by Empire State Development shortly. A third application cycle opened in mid-January 2020. We anticipate that this will exhaust the original \$20 million appropriation. While these first cycles of funding have clearly demonstrated the potential of NYFIRST to attract and retain scientific talent, it is also clear that the competition for scientists has not abated; indeed, this competition has expanded as governments, academic institutions and companies around the world have recognized the value of the bioscience sector and the importance of the human capital that drives the sector's intellectual property creation and entrepreneurship.



**AMSNY requests that the Legislature and the Governor renew the NYFIRST program with a new \$20 million appropriation and maintain the current requirements and funding parameters.**

## **Other Department of Health Programs**

### *New York State Stem Cell Program (NYSTEM)*

In 2007, New York State committed \$600 million to stem cell research, among the largest government-financed stem cell programs in the country (it is now second only to California's Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM)). New York State's objective was to develop a stem cell research community that could investigate the potential of stem cell technology to alleviate disease and improve human health. Of nearly equal importance was the goal of economic development – the investment in research and facilities that would create jobs and fuel the economy. NYSTEM has proven itself a highly effective, successful program, supporting innovative basic and translational stem cell research. In addition, funding from NYSTEM has been used to create and expand stem cell research infrastructure spanning the entire state and has enabled institutions to recruit and develop a world-class scientific workforce.

Since its inception, the Empire State Stem Cell Board has released 22 Requests for Applications (RFAs), awarded more than \$400 million and supported more than 750 full-time jobs. This has resulted in significant intellectual property, with more than 50 patent applications and several prominent well-funded startup companies launched in New York State.

### *Why should we continue to invest in NYSTEM?*

There is an acute need to maintain predictable funding for the NYSTEM program. In addition to the aforementioned successes, treatments and potential cures are yet to be fully realized from New York State's significant investment in stem cell science. Continued funding and the authorization of new RFAs this year will:

- Prevent the delay of groundbreaking research and the potential for next generation treatments and cures
- Prevent New York State from losing its world-class scientific talent
- Reaffirm New York State's commitment to stem cell science and, more broadly, to scientific research and innovation

**We urge the legislature to provide full funding for the New York State Stem Cell Program (NYSTEM) at \$44.8 million in SFY2020-21. In addition, we urge the State to support the new Requests for Applications in 2020 recently released by DOH.**

### *Empire Clinical Research Investigator Program*

In 2000, New York State established the Empire Clinical Research Investigator Program (ECRIP) in order to support physicians in training fellowships, as well as infrastructure costs necessary for clinical research. ECRIP awards have helped better position New York's medical

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schools and teaching hospitals as international leaders in biomedicine—attracting the brightest medical students and physician trainees and improving the state’s competitive position for federal research dollars. Since its implementation 2000, over 910 project abstracts have been submitted for funding with 586 awarded to 66 teaching hospitals, totaling more than \$100 million in funding.

**The original SFY2020-21 Executive budget proposed to eliminate ECRIP in its entirety, but was amended to SFY2019-2020 funding levels in the 30-Day Amendments. AMSNY urges the Legislature support funding ECRIP at the currently proposed \$3.445 million and continue the success of this program.**

### **Closing**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and for your continued support for biomedical research and New York State’s 17 medical schools. I welcome any questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Tassler  
Director of Policy and Programming  
Associated Medical Schools of New York

### **AMSNY Member Institutions**

- Albany Medical College
- Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University
- CUNY School of Medicine
- Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians & Surgeons
- Icahn School of Medicine at Mt. Sinai Medical Center
- Jacobs School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, University at Buffalo, SUNY
- New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine
- New York Medical College
- New York University Grossman School of Medicine
- New York University Long Island School of Medicine
- SUNY Downstate Medical Center
- SUNY Upstate Medical University
- Stony Brook University School of Medicine
- Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine

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- University of Rochester School of Medicine & Dentistry
- Weill Cornell Medicine
- Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell



# DIVERSITY IN MEDICINE

AMSNY supports programs across the educational continuum to expand the pool of students choosing careers in medicine and other health professions. The programs are supported through a grant from the State Department of Health, with additional financial assistance from the medical schools. In 2019, the AMSNY Diversity in Medicine Program was recognized by *Insight into Diversity* with the Inspiring Programs in STEM Award.

## POST-BACCALAUREATE & MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS

The programs provide coursework, financial assistance, mentoring and comprehensive support services to students recommended by participating medical schools. Students are referred by holistic admissions processes and offered conditional acceptance to medical school.



# 94%

of students who completed the Master's Degree programs have entered medical school

(DATA FROM 2008-2019)

### MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS

**MS in Interdisciplinary Medical Sciences**  
New York Medical College

**MS in Physiology and Biophysics**  
Renaissance School of Medicine at Stony Brook University

**MS in Medical Technology**  
SUNY Upstate Medical University

*"The UB Post-Baccalaureate Program has given me access to new heights and a scaffolding to stand upon and pursue medicine without second-guessing myself."*

**Karole Collier**

Medical Student, Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the University at Buffalo  
Alumna, AMSNY Post-Baccalaureate Program

### AMSNY POST-BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM

Jacobs School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences,  
University at Buffalo, SUNY

520 students have participated since the program's creation in 1991  
(DATA FROM 1991-2019)

*"If I didn't have this opportunity, I probably wouldn't be a doctor today. About 90% of my patients are Hispanic. For them to come and see me is a big relief. I speak their language. I know their culture."*

**Dr. Jaime Nieto**

Chief of Neurologic Surgery, New York-Presbyterian/Queens Hospital  
Alumnus, AMSNY Post-Baccalaureate Program



**86%** of students who matriculated into medical school graduated

**71%** of MD graduates went into primary care residencies

**59%** stayed in New York for residencies

(DATA FROM 1991-2019)

**amsny**  
The Voice of Medical Education



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# DIVERSITY IN MEDICINE

## DIVERSITY IN MEDICINE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Started in 2017-2018, this scholarship program aims to address the gap in physician diversity. The full tuition scholarship helps medical students from backgrounds underrepresented in medicine by eliminating the financial barrier to medical school enrollment.

- ➔ 10 initial scholarship recipients, 40 students when fully funded
- ➔ Students from medical schools throughout New York State
- ➔ Scholarship pegged to SUNY tuition
- ➔ Up to 4 year service commitment in an underserved area of NYS



(DATA REPRESENTS ALL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS FROM 2017-2019)

*"The AMSNY Diversity In Medicine Scholarship has given me the opportunity to successfully go through medical school with less of a financial burden, but it has also given me much more than that. I hope that my successes will open up doors for those with similar backgrounds who aspire to serve New York State's beautiful multicultural population."*

**Sebastian Placide**  
 Medical Student, Albert Einstein College of Medicine  
 Alumnus, AMSNY Post-Baccalaureate Program  
 Three-Year Scholarship Recipient

In addition to the post-baccalaureate programs, AMSNY's Diversity in Medicine initiative targets students in college.

## PATHWAYS TO CAREERS IN MEDICINE AND RESEARCH City College of New York

Students are mentored by National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded researchers, who help them develop and conduct independent research projects. At the conclusion of the program, research projects are presented locally and nationally.

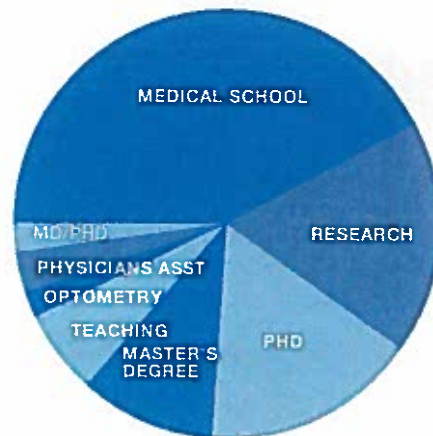
(DATA FROM 2008-2019. TRACKING DATA FROM 59 STUDENTS)

### LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

CUNY School of Medicine

The Learning Resource Center provides academic resources, skills, mentorship and support that assist CUNY medical students in pursuing their joint BS/MD degrees.

Number of medical students that utilized:

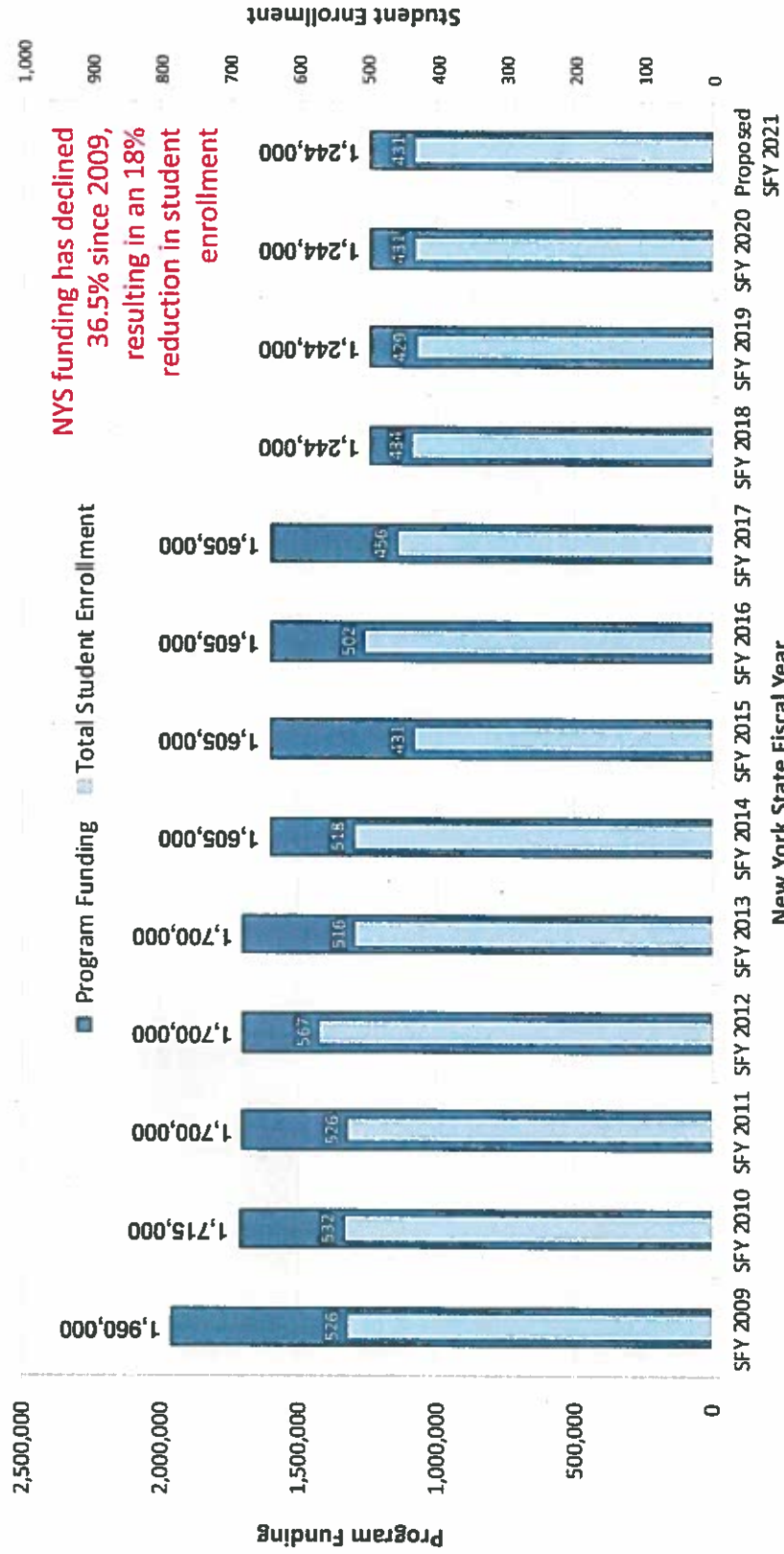


**151**  
 students



The Associated Medical Schools of New York (AMSNY) is a consortium of the 17 public and private medical schools across the state. Its mission is to promote high-quality and cost-efficient healthcare by assuring that the medical schools of New York State can provide outstanding medical education, care, and research.

## AMSNY Diversity in Medicine Program Program Funding & Enrollment History, SFY 2009 - Proposed SFY 2021



## AMSNY Diversity in Medicine Program Student Enrollment, SFY 2009 - Proposed SFY 2021

New York State Fiscal Year	Program Funding	Total Student Enrollment	University at Buffalo Post-Baccalaureate	NYMC, Stony Brook & SUNY Upstate Master's Programs	CUNY School of Medicine Learning Center	CCNY Pathways to Careers in Medicine & Research	Staten Island University Hospital Physician Career Enhancement	Einstein College of Medicine Mentoring in Medicine	Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai PREP	NYU MCAT Prep	Columbia STAT & MCAT Prep
SFY 2009	1,960,000	526	16	12	368	23	12	35	19	19	22
SFY 2010	1,715,000	532	22	10	350	25	19	32	22	10	42
SFY 2011	1,700,000	526	16	13	302	30	13	95	10	27	20
SFY 2012	1,700,000	567	16	14	400	20	9	48	10	30	20
SFY 2013	1,700,000	516	18	20	400	23	13	32	10	0	0
SFY 2014	1,605,000	518	22	19	385	24	15	42	11	0	0
SFY 2015	1,605,000	431	24	18	356	20	13	0	0	0	0
SFY 2016	1,605,000	502	19	16	386	25	13	24	19	0	0
SFY 2017	1,605,000	456	20	18	385	20	13	0	0	0	0
SFY 2018	1,244,000	434	20	15	385	13	0	0	1	0	0
SFY 2019	1,244,000	429	21	13	385	10	0	0	0	0	0
SFY 2020	1,244,000	431	17	14	385	15	0	0	0	0	0
Proposed SFY 2021	1,244,000	431	17	14	385	15	0	0	0	0	0