



Dan Hocoy, Ph.D.

President

Testimony

Before

Senate Higher Education Hearing

“Affordable and Accessible College in New York State”

October 30, 2019

University at Buffalo Center for Tomorrow

Good afternoon,

My name is Dr. Dan Hocoy and I am proud to serve as the 11th President of SUNY Erie Community College. It is my pleasure to be here to represent our Board of Trustees, students, faculty and staff.

Thank you, Chairwoman Stavisky, other honorable senators and staff for the opportunity to talk about the issues of college accessibility and affordability - topics of importance to the citizens of New York State – especially in SUNY Erie's primary service area of Erie County and Western New York.

As the first in my family to go beyond high school, I understand the struggles that many students face in the pursuit of a college education. At SUNY Erie, we not only deliver a comprehensive, affordable and accessible education, but we also provide the support necessary for our students to succeed. Small class sizes, structured advisement, tutoring, opportunity programs aimed at underserved populations, and other support mechanisms ensure our students receive the personalized attention and assistance they need to complete their education as efficiently and affordably as possible.

SUNY Erie is truly the community's college offering three conveniently located campuses located throughout the County. Our North Campus in Williamsville serves the northern and eastern suburbs of Buffalo; City Campus in downtown Buffalo is easily accessible to city residents; and South Campus in Orchard Park and Hamburg serves southern Erie County and beyond. SUNY Erie offers more than 100 associate degree, certificate, joint, and online programs, with flexible educational options including full and part-time instruction; day, evening and weekend classes; and distance learning opportunities; to enable students to successfully achieve their goals.

We continue to be a great value to students in large part because of funding from Pell, TAP, the Excelsior Scholarship, Say Yes Buffalo and the hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships we distribute through the SUNY Erie Community College Foundation each year. Collectively, these programs, along with our state and county funding, contribute to an affordable public higher education at SUNY Erie. And with life-changing programs like EOP, we are able to provide the support and services that students need while they are with us, to help them succeed academically and personally.

SUNY Erie has been helping students earn an education for more than 70 years, but there's a new purpose, role and identity for us today. Our nationally recognized college is serving as a social and economic engine for the region's resurgence. Programs like Nanotechnology and Mechatronics train students for immediate careers

in cutting-edge fields. Hands-on education in Green Building Technology helps lead our region into an environmentally sustainable future, and, our award-winning Culinary Arts and Nursing programs prepare our students to have an immediate impact in their respective fields. Our students benefit from the instruction of renowned faculty in Dental Hygiene and Vision Care Technology, but the impact of these programs extends beyond traditional classroom instruction. Our regional community benefits from the hands-on learning practices of these two programs through free dental and vision services in our community clinics.

I am proud to say that under my direction, through better forecasting and planning, SUNY Erie has been able to hold the line on tuition and fees, and live within its approved budget during my first two years as President. However, that is becoming more and more difficult as we - as community colleges - face a perfect storm that directly impacts how we do "business". Low unemployment rates and the declining number of students of college age have a direct impact on enrollment trends at community colleges. When the economy is strong, people can easily find jobs and don't have a compelling need to seek additional skills or credentials to find work.

We often get lost in reciting facts and figures to you when we're talking about funding, but I want to leave you with a story that shows you the impact we have and why that funding is so important. Like myself, Yousif was a first-generation college student, who made the decision to come to SUNY Erie to earn his degree in Dental Lab Technology. When we asked him why he chose that major, he related a story from his childhood about his mom. He told us that when he was growing up his mother rarely smiled because of some issues with her teeth and her lack of self-esteem because of it. Yousif chose his profession because he wanted the opportunity to make his mother, and others like her, smile again.

We are asking for your support to ensure that students like Yousif can pursue their dreams and have a lasting impact on the lives they will touch once they graduate.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to address you this afternoon. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



**TESTIMONY
OF THE
NEW YORK PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP
BEFORE THE
NEW YORK STATE SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE
REGARDING
THE COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION
OCTOBER 30, 2019
Buffalo, New York**

Good afternoon. My name is Blair Horner and I am the Executive Director of the New York Public Interest Research Group. As you know, NYPIRG is a statewide, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization founded by college students in 1973 to engage their peers in civic life. NYPIRG's broad programmatic work provides students with a range of opportunities to participate in public affairs and advance responses to social problems that matter most to them. In collaboration with and guided by professional staff—researchers, organizers, advocates and attorneys—students tackle pressing issues while learning and developing professional-level skills that will boost their prospects for success in college, the job market and throughout their lives. Our Board of Directors solely consists of college and university students elected from campuses with NYPIRG chapters across the State.

We appreciate this opportunity to share our perspectives on the costs of higher education in New York. As we have stated in previous testimony, NYPIRG intends to present testimony at each of the Committee's hearings. Today I will focus on additional tuition costs students have faced and budget shortfalls that are affecting the State University of New York system.

NYPIRG thanks the Legislature for passing the Jose Peralta DREAM Act this year, for restoring funding to critical higher education programs cut in the executive budget, and for advocating for the elimination of the "TAP Gap" and more robust "maintenance of effort" legislation.

Starting in 2017, NYPIRG has been interviewing students who were experiencing difficulties funding the costs of their education, from tuition and textbooks, to related costs like food and childcare. Scores of interviews later, we have gathered insights into the impacts of state divestment in higher education; state and federal financial aid, scholarship, and grant programs; and who benefits from current programs and who is still left out.

Budget Short Falls Translate into Reduced Services for SUNY Students

Through years of underfunding, New York State has starved CUNY and SUNY campus budgets

and put student support services and educational quality at risk. One problem cutting into CUNY and SUNY budgets has been the growing “TAP Gap.” The tuition price per student at senior colleges (\$6,930 at CUNY 4-year schools and \$7,070 at SUNY 4-year schools)¹ continues to outpace the maximum Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) award (reimbursed to schools at a rate of \$5,000 per full-TAP recipient)² resulting in an increasing “TAP Gap.” While students who receive the full TAP award haven’t had to pay the difference, the individual colleges have had to absorb the loss in revenue. Last year, CUNY reported a \$74 million TAP Gap.³

Another problem has been the state’s underfunding of mandatory cost increases. While the state promised in 2011 to maintain its funding levels from year to year as it raised the tuition burden on students, the state has not included funding for inflationary or other mandatory cost increases like electricity and staff contracts. That has created another gap in state funding for mandatory costs.

According to SUNY New Paltz Vice President for Administration and Finance in 2018, revenues are simply not keeping pace with necessary increases in expenditure. One factor among others cited was no increases in direct state support since 2012.⁴ As a result of budget shortfalls, Binghamton University cut their library budget and administering a hiring freeze on all staff positions aside from Adjuncts and Teaching Assistants.⁵ The university is not replacing two retiring faculty members in the Department of Art and Design and put a temporary suspension on the graphic design minor.⁶ Stony Brook University has enacted a hiring freeze as well, citing an \$18.5 million budget shortfall, and are eliminating their undergraduate pharmacology program.⁷

The erosion of state support and the creation of growing funding gaps is translating into an erosion of student services and quality of education. Students have experienced firsthand, the difficulty in getting into the classes they need to graduate, limited services such as library hours, and advisement gaps across the CUNY and SUNY system.

Evelyn Marks, a Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) major at SUNY Cortland, is also concerned about graduating on time. With some of the classes that she needs conflicting with other required classes, she may have to push her graduation date out a year.

¹ Supra 4.

² New York State Higher Education Services Corporation, The New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), <https://www.hesc.ny.gov/pay-for-college/apply-for-financial-aid/nys-tap.html>.

³ City University of New York, 2019-2020 Operating Budget Request and Four-Year Financial Plan; January 14, 2019, <http://www2.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/budget-and-finance/FY2020-Budget-Request-for-OBFSite-1.pdf>.

⁴ The New Paltz Oracle, “Budget Cuts Costs on SUNY New Paltz Campus,” November 8, 2018, <https://oracle.newpaltz.edu/budget-cuts-costs-on-suny-new-paltz-campus/>.

⁵ Pipe Dream, “Running Low on Revenue Binghamton University Struggles to Cover Employee Raises,” November 26, 2018, <https://www.bupipedream.com/news/101083/running-low-on-revenue-binghamton-university-struggles-to-cover-employee-raises/>.

⁶ Pipe Dream, Kerr, Jake, “Department of Art and Design to Temporarily Suspend Graphic Design Minor,” November 26, 2018, <https://www.bupipedream.com/news/101025/department-of-art-and-design-to-temporarily-suspend-graphic-design-minor/>.

⁷ The Statesman, Liebson, Rebecca, “College of Arts and Sciences Cuts Undergraduate Pharmacology Program,” February 25, 2018, <https://www.sbstatesman.com/2018/02/25/college-of-arts-and-sciences-cuts-undergraduate-pharmacology-program/>.

Haley Gray, a SUNY New Paltz student, shared her difficulty enrolling in the classes she needed to graduate:

“I am currently a Senior. When I decided that I wanted to major in art education I chose to come to SUNY New Paltz for their top rated art education program. Since the budget cuts, it’s been nearly impossible for me to get all of the classes that I need in order to graduate. When I first transferred here there were so many more sections of classes offered.

Making my schedule last semester was a nightmare because the classes I needed for my major and the classes I needed in order to fulfill my general education requirements conflicted in time slots. I had to repeat studio courses that I had already completed just to fulfill the requirements for my major. This semester I had the same experience. Not being able to take the studio courses in my concentration negatively impacts my educational development and my ability to teach in the future. I’m paying for a quality education but due to budget cuts out of my control, my education is being compromised.”

Luisa Garcia, a Nassau Community College student, shared her difficulty getting the advisement she needed:

“Right now, I am working towards becoming a physical therapist but have had issues trying to find the classes I need. I went to the advising office on campus, but was only told what classes I would need to get my general degree and not what would best prepare me to transfer. The office attempted to help, but because they had to help so many other students, I wasn’t able to get the advising that I need to make sure that I will be prepared for life after college. Also, due to budget issues the school does not have all of the classes I will need to continue my education, so I will be behind when I transfer schools.”

- **NYPIRG urges the Legislature to enhance funding for CUNY and SUNY by closing the “TAP Gap” and include mandatory costs in its base funding equation in order to help students get the classes they need to graduate, reduce class sizes, and bolster student advisement.**

SUNY Students Struggle with Rising Tuition and Other Costs

Despite the clear benefits of public higher education for the health and prosperity of the state, students have been shortchanged: the state routinely underfunds CUNY and SUNY and costs get pushed onto students and their families. Beginning in 2011, nearly constant tuition hikes have raised tuition rates by more than 42%.⁸

Recently, NYPIRG released an analysis of the overall financial impact of the SUNY2020 legislation. We reviewed tuition hikes since 2011, compared to enrollment data for 2- and 4-year

⁸ SUNY tuition for Academic Year (AY) 2010-2011 was \$4,970, and CUNY was \$4,830. The so-called “rational tuition” policy allowed for \$300 annual increases for 5 years, or a total of \$1,500 by July, 2016. NY’s Final State Budget for AY 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 allowed for three \$200 dollar increases, bringing tuition to \$7,070 at SUNY and \$6,930 at CUNY, hence tuition has increased 42%. See: <http://www.suny.edu/smartrack/tuition-and-fees/> and <http://www2.cuny.edu/financial-aid/tuition-and-college-costs/tuition-fees>. Calculations performed by NYPIRG.

public colleges for full-time students in the fall and spring. We did not look at part-time students, or students attending in the summer, winter, or other non-traditional sessions. Our analysis found that New York State has charged public college students nearly \$4 billion more as a result of scheduled tuition hikes at SUNY and CUNY. Even when considering additional assistance provided by the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) and the new Excelsior Scholarship program, students have paid \$2.5 billion in additional tuition.

During the years reviewed by this analysis, the state's all funds budget increased by over 26%⁹ – more than enough to have allowed for increased state support for public colleges and universities, and to halt the growing tuition burden placed on public college students and their families. Anecdotal evidence buttresses the claim that tuition dollars are being used to fill budget shortfalls resulting from stagnant state support.

The added tuition dollars have added up over an approximate 9-year period resulting from passage of the “SUNY 2020” law first enacted in 2011 and actions by local governments impacting community college costs. This year's tuition increases will drive that number even higher.

While New York's substantial financial aid and opportunity programs have shielded some students from these hikes, there are many who fall through the eligibility cracks or who cannot apply for reasons outside of their control. We'll review some of these shortfalls later. With every tuition hike, New York continues to rely on students and families, many who struggle to keep up with rising costs, rather than addressing years of state underfunding.

Fabienne Lescouflair, a recent SUNY New Paltz student shared:

“While I was at my 2-year school, both of my parents ended up paying for half of my tuition while I worked my brains out and paid for the other half myself. Now, my mom can't help me out anymore because of the tuition hikes, which forced me to take out loans in the middle of the semester to cover the tuition. It's not ideal but it's better than dropping out.”

- **NYPIRG urges the Legislature to freeze all tuition rates at senior and community colleges to protect college affordability.**

Students Succeed In Proven Opportunity Programs – Why Are They Routinely Cut in The Executive Budget?

Opportunity programs, which are designed for educationally and economically disadvantaged students, have a steady track record of success in increasing graduation rates among the most at-risk students.¹⁰ In general, students in opportunity programs are individuals who have come from low-income communities and often rank low on traditional measures of collegiate admissions standards, such SAT scores, high school GPA, and class standing.

New York State has several opportunity programs in place to help increase access to higher

⁹ Citizens Budget Commission, “NYS Trends During the Cuomo Administration,” Fiscal years 2011-2019, October 18, 2018, <https://cbcny.org/research/nys-trends-during-cuomo-administration>.

¹⁰ For an example of the success of opportunity programs, see State University of New York's Office of Opportunity Programs, <http://system.suny.edu/oop/>.

education: Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK), Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP), College Discovery, Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), and Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP). These programs take a comprehensive approach to college access and affordability by building in academic counseling, mentoring, and coverage of related costs such as free metrocards, textbooks, and child care. This approach works, and increases graduation rates. All students deserve this model of a holistically supported education and New York State and City must make the investments to make it happen.

Ariyah Adams, a SUNY New Paltz student, credits the Education Opportunity Program (EOP) for their success in college.

“I am currently a junior majoring in communications with a concentration in public relations and double minoring in theater and business. I pay for tuition through TAP and Pell Grants, as well as take out loans to cover the rest of my bill. After I graduate, I plan on attending graduate school at either SUNY New Paltz or a different SUNY. I am still undecided about that. I plan on paying for graduate school through applying for grants and scholarships.

Right now I am working two jobs, I work at the dining hall on campus and I have a work study job. I don't depend on money from my parents so usually I pay for my textbooks and food on my own or a split the cost of the textbook with a friend or classmate in the same class as me. I am also a student at the Educational Opportunity Program at my school which has helped me a lot, getting through navigating financial aid. If this program didn't exist, I'm not sure if I would be in college. The EOP program has helped me grow into a strong individual and has offered me tutoring, mentors and advisors that always have my back.”

Despite the track records of the successes of these programs, each year the Executive Budget proposes cuts and forces the Legislature to fight to restore programs instead of building on them.

- **NYPIRG urges the Legislature to expand funding to the opportunity programs listed above.**
- **NYPIRG recommends that the state looks to programs such as CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) as a model for free public college which addresses the all-in costs of higher education and has proven to increase graduation rates.**

Current State Financial Aid Programs Fall Short – And Students Fall Through Cracks

Inflexible award schedules do not support on-time graduation for too many students. Both Excelsior Scholars and TAP recipients are limited to accessing their aid in fall and spring semesters alone. The Excelsior Scholarship mandates 30 credits per year to maintain eligibility (or else the scholarship turns into a loan), the award is not available for summer and winter sessions. While scholarship recipients can maintain eligibility by taking 12-credits per semester in the fall and spring, they must pay out of pocket for the additional 6 credits in the winter or summer sessions. Meaning, the state's new “free tuition” scholarship is not always tuition-free, even for those who qualify, maintain eligibility, and receive the award.

What's more, the Excelsior Scholarship is a last-dollar program. It does not provide any aid to qualifying students whose tuition is covered already, but who could, for example, use Pell Grant money to offset textbook, housing, or transportation costs.

Sarah Pulinski, a SUNY New Paltz and Excelsior scholar shared her experience:

"I received the Excelsior Scholarship. The problem with Excelsior is that it's more difficult to qualify for than initially advertised and there's a lot of hoops you need to jump through in order to get it.

I have been on the phone with Excelsior this semester a total of 4 times. The financial aid office here has even gotten involved and I still have not received the money. It's very frustrating and it's like they want you to struggle to get it even if you do qualify. Tuition increases would mean more people wanting to receive this money and probably put more pressure on HESC which already seems to be struggling to help students get the money promised."

TAP recipients are eligible for the award in the fall and spring semesters as long as they take a minimum of 12 credits per semester. However, with the exception of some opportunity programs or for some students with disabilities, the award is only available for up to 8 semesters. In order for students to reach the credits required for graduation on time (often 120), they must take 15 credits per semester or add summer and winter session classes. And when TAP recipients take winter and summer classes, they must pay out of pocket.

Chelsea Grate, a SUNY Cortland student, was worried about graduating on time but still elected not to take summer classes and pay out of pocket:

"This is my second year of college, but my first year at SUNY Cortland. I transferred here from Hudson Valley Community College. I'm a Political Science major with a minor in Communications, and I'm somewhere between a sophomore and a junior because of the credits I transferred in with from HVCC and high school.

I am concerned about graduating on time. If I had six more credits I'd be considered a junior right now. I didn't want to do classes over the summer because I didn't want to have to pay for that out of pocket on top of everything else. Once I do graduate from Cortland I'm going to grad school, preferably at U Albany or Syracuse. I pay for school with financial aid, TAP, and the Pell Grant. I also work at Target and Market 32 on breaks to pay for textbooks and food for the semester. If I didn't get financial aid, I would probably be working full time at Target, and I don't think it'd be possible to go to school at the same time as that."

For some students, a 15-credit course-load is a reasonable ask. This is supported by the 12 percent increase in students taking 15 credits per fall and spring at CUNY and the 4 percent increase at SUNY. However, 15 credits per semester is simply unrealistic for some. The issue is particularly acute for working students. Currently, students nationwide work an average of about 30 hours per week. At least a quarter of all students – and about a fifth of all students who enroll on a full-time

basis – are also employed full-time while enrolled.¹¹ We've heard from students who struggle to balance their full-time course load, jobs, and personal obligations. In a recent report put out by the CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, of students that work, 79 percent reported that they work to pay for living expenses and over a third of those who work believe that having a job negatively impacts their academic performance.¹²

Robust financial aid programs exist to safeguard low and middle income students from the financial barriers which can impede college completion. Financial aid barriers in the winter and spring semester must be lifted. It could even promote early graduation for those looking to jumpstart their careers or postgraduate studies.

- **NYPIRG urges the Legislature to provide TAP and the Excelsior Scholarship during winter and summer sessions and to expand aid for use beyond covering tuition.**

Despite prisons being called “correctional facilities,” they do a dismal job in turning lives around. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, nationwide about two-thirds of released state prisoners were re-arrested within three years and three-quarters within five.¹³ Too often, prison is a revolving door. And it's a revolving door that impacts certain communities worse than others. According to the Cuomo Administration, nearly half of New York inmate population is African American, nearly one quarter is Hispanic, and nearly one quarter is white.¹⁴

The currently high recidivism rate helps no one. The connection between higher education and reduced recidivism has been well established. A study conducted by the University of California at Los Angeles found that “[a] \$1 million investment in incarceration will prevent about 350 crimes, while that same investment in education will prevent more than 600 crimes. Correctional education is almost twice as cost effective as incarceration.”¹⁵

While prisoners can sometimes get access to educational courses now, they are ineligible for the federal Pell Grant program as well as TAP. Since the vast majority of inmates are low income, they usually cannot afford college courses while in prison.

- **NYPIRG urges the Legislature to provide TAP eligibility for incarcerated**

¹¹ 2016 Student Experience Survey, CUNY, http://www2.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/surveys/2016_SES_Highlights_Updated_10112016.pdf.

¹² City University of New York, “2016 Student Experience Survey A survey of CUNY undergraduate students,” http://www2.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/surveys/2016_SES_Highlights_Updated_10112016.pdf.

¹³ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, “3 In 4 Former Prisoners In 30 States Arrested Within 5 Years Of Release,” April 22, 2014, see: <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/press/rprts05p0510pr.cfm>.

¹⁴ New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, “Under Custody Report: Profile of Inmate Population Under Custody on January 1, 2013,” see: http://www.doccs.ny.gov/Research/Reports/2013/UnderCustody_Report_2013.pdf.

¹⁵ Audrey Bazos and Jessica Hausman, UCLA School of Public Policy and Social Research Department of Policy Studies, “Correctional Education as a Crime Control Program,” p 2, March 2004, see: <http://www.ceanational.org/PDFs/ed-as-crime-control.pdf>.

individuals.

Graduate TAP began in 1974-1975, helping 22,253 New York graduate students with an average award of \$302 with a maximum award of \$600. The program has fluctuated greatly over the years with regards to the number of students receiving the award, the maximum award available, average award distributed, and the amount of money the state invested in the program. Before TAP for graduate students was completely eliminated in 2009-2010, it served 7,251 students.¹⁶

The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that jobs requiring master's degrees and professional degrees will grow by 22% and 20%, respectively, from 2010 to 2020 – faster than any other level of education.¹⁷ According to the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, a worker with a high school diploma can expect to earn \$1.3 million over a lifetime, while a worker with a bachelor's degree will earn \$2.3 million and a worker with a master's degree will earn \$2.7 million over a lifetime.¹⁸ While the benefits of advanced degrees are clear, financial aid programs are either non-existent or uninviting to prospective graduate students, many of whom already hold student loan debt.

- **NYPIRG urges the Legislature to expand TAP to eligible graduate students.**

Vulnerable Students Need Support Services to Access Higher Education

The goal of effective college aid shouldn't be to just cover tuition, but to cover the added costs that can hamstring student success. If costs including textbooks, transportation, food, housing and childcare are standing in the way of a student's educational success, then they must be addressed.

The cost of child care can be a significant barrier toward accessing a degree. According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, just 8 percent of single mothers who enroll in college graduate with an associate or bachelor's degree within six years, compared with 49 percent of women students who are not mothers.¹⁹ Single mothers with only a high school diploma are over three times as likely to live in poverty as single mothers with a bachelor's degree.²⁰

While the average cost of private child care or daycare in NYC can be prohibitively expensive (roughly \$25,000 a year²¹), enrolling a child in daycare at CUNY can cost as little as \$5 a day. It's

¹⁶ New York State Higher Education Services Corporation, "Graduate Level TAP AY 1974-1975 thru 2009-2010," Neal Warren, September 2013.

¹⁷ United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook, Projections 2010-2020," <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/about/projections-overview.htm>.

¹⁸ The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, "The College Payoff: Education, Occupations, Lifetime Earnings," Page 2, August 15th 2011, <http://www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/collegepayoff-summary.pdf>.

¹⁹ Institute for Women's Policy Research, "Investing in Single Mothers' Higher Education: Costs and Benefits to Individuals, Families, and Society." <https://iwpr.org/publications/investing-single-mothers-higher-ed/>.

²⁰ Institute for Women's Policy Research. "Investing in Single Mothers' Higher Education: Costs and Benefits to Individuals, Families, and Society." <https://iwpr.org/publications/investing-single-mothers-higher-ed/>.

²¹ Bernard, Tara Siegel. "Choosing Child Care When You Go Back to Work." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 22 Nov. 2013. www.nytimes.com/2013/11/23/your-money/choosing-child-care-when-you-go-back-to-work.html.

unsurprising that access to affordable child care increases degree completion rates. A study by Monroe Community College in Rochester, NY, found that student parents that used the child care center there were 30 percent more likely to stay in school. CUNY and SUNY child care centers are a unique and powerful tool for socio-economic mobility.

- **NYPIRG urges the Legislature to robustly fund CUNY and SUNY child care centers.**

NYPIRG commends the work of CUNY and SUNY staff, often in collaboration with our campus NYPIRG chapters, student governments and the community at large, to stock and maintain food pantries in compliance with the mandate from Governor Cuomo that every CUNY and SUNY campus create food pantries. That mandate came in part as a response to a report by groups including NYPIRG entitled *Hunger on Campus*. The report looked at food insecurity on campus, and how that may undermine the educational success of untold thousands of students.²² Consistent with prior studies, 48 percent of survey respondents reported food insecurity in the previous 30 days.

Taking a closer look at the approximately 1,800 students who reported experiencing food insecurity, thirty-two percent believed that hunger or housing problems had an impact on their education, from foregoing textbook purchases, to missing or dropping classes. Students that are hungry and homeless must get the services they need.

- **NYPIRG urges the Legislature to include monies in the budget to support operating expenses food pantries across campuses at SUNY and CUNY.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

²² NYPIRG, *Hunger on Campus, The Challenge of Food Insecurity for College Students*, October 2016, http://www.nypirgstudents.org/reports/Hunger_on_Campus_NYPIRG.pdf, accessed November 30, 2016.



Testimony

to the
Senate Standing Committee on Higher Education
on the
Examination
of the
Cost of Public Higher Education
October 30, 2019

Prepared by
New York State United Teachers
800 Troy Schenectady Road
Latham, NY 12110-2455
518-213-6000
www.nysut.org

Representing more than 600,000 professionals in education and health care
Affiliated with the AFT – NEA – AFL-CIO

*Testimony of
Andy Sako
President, Faculty Association Erie Community College
to the
Senate Standing Committee on Higher Education
Toby Ann Stavisky, Chair
and
Co-Sponsors
Andrew S. Gounardes
Velmanette Montgomery
Kevin S. Parker
Julia Salazar
on the Examination of the
Cost of Public Higher Education
October 30, 2019*

Senate Higher Education Hearing

Chairperson Stavisky, honorable members of the Legislature and distinguished staff, I am Andy Sako, President Faculty Association Erie Community College, representing SUNY Community Colleges. Today I am testifying on behalf of the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT). NYSUT represents more than 600,000 teachers, school-related professionals, academic and professional faculty in higher education, professionals in education, in health care and retirees statewide. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the cost of public higher education, student borrowing and other challenges to affordability and accessibility.

My testimony represents the concerns of over 80,000 higher education faculty and professional staff who work in colleges and universities across the state. These include the members of United University Professions at the State University of New York, the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York and the faculty and staff at nearly all the SUNY Community Colleges in this state.

Access to quality public higher education is a crucial component of the state's efforts to recruit and retain businesses and industries. As businesses consider where to locate, they are drawn to locations with an available pool of highly trained and educated employees. The State University of New York (SUNY) and the City University of New York (CUNY) help to fulfill that requirement by instructing and preparing New Yorkers for current and future job opportunities.

A growing number of employment opportunities require advanced degrees, which further underscores the need for greater state investment in public higher education. Properly funding these institutions will help to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to an affordable, quality education as offered by CUNY and SUNY.

Affordability and Accessibility

A student's ability to attend a public institution of higher education, and complete their degree on time, depends on a number of factors — many of which involve financial resources, as well as student and academic supports. A lack of financial resources can severely limit one's ability to attend college as a full-time student, pay tuition and student fees and purchase textbooks or other required course materials — without incurring crushing debt.

Due to the student debt crisis, much time and attention has been paid to affordability, however, more attention must be paid to accessibility. NYSUT has stressed the need for increased student access to quality public higher education that provides students with the ability to enroll in the courses they need, and not delay their graduation because a course is only offered one semester a year. It means a student will have direct access to student and academic supports to help them successfully navigate and complete their degree program.

Over the years, both SUNY and CUNY have designed programs to provide students with supports that meet the definition of meaningful access. Programs such as CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) and SUNY's Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) have proven track records and help students complete their education. However, both programs are restricted due to funding limitations, and have requirements that applicants must meet in order to be accepted and continue in the program.

CUNY's ASAP program was started in 2007, at six community colleges, to improve completion rates by providing wraparound services to students. When the program was created, less than four percent of CUNY community college students completed an associate degree within two years, and only 13 percent did so within three years. Many studies have examined the ASAP

program, which has since been expanded to serve students attending nine community colleges. These studies concluded that the program is cost-effective — the average cost-per-degree for an ASAP student is lower than for the costs for those receiving a standard college education. Other studies have also shown that retention and completion rates are significantly higher for ASAP students, when compared to other groups of students. Six years after beginning a CUNY ASAP program, 63.3 percent of ASAP first-time freshmen had earned either an associate or baccalaureate degree (or both) vs. 43.3 percent of comparison group students.

SUNY's EOP program was created in the 1960s and recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. It was applied at the State University College at Buffalo with 249 students and has since been expanded to 48 SUNY campuses. The program has graduated more than 70,000 students. EOP alumni continue to live in New York State and go on to become prominent figures in our communities. The 2016, six-year baccalaureate graduation rate for EOP students is nearly 70 percent.

SUNY's EOP program offers students support services, such as academic, career and personal counseling, tutoring and supplemental instruction. The program also provides financial assistance to cover non-tuition related expenses (e.g. books, supplies, etc.).

The academic and student supports offered by both EOP and ASAP go a long way to not only address affordability issues but also to increase access. Public higher education is not a one-size fits all model. Students often have various needs that must be addressed. These needs can range from housing to food insecurity to health care or other personal issues. We call upon the state to provide a significant increased investment in our public higher education institutions to help them better support students' ability to attend and complete their degree programs. NYSUT believes that all students attending SUNY and CUNY should be afforded the academic and student supports offered through ASAP and EOP.

Community Colleges

At this time, I would like to discuss community colleges. As you know, community colleges educate and prepare students for the workforce as well as provide the foundation for those students who move on to four-year campuses or universities. Community colleges educate all types of students, they help to advance social mobility and are located where students live and work. They often collaborate with regional businesses and employers to develop and provide training to address local workforce needs.

Notwithstanding the Legislature's commitment to community colleges, state funding to these campuses is not commensurate with the provisions of the state education law. State education law stipulates that the state shall pay 40 percent of the operating costs of these campuses, however, the state is not meeting its obligation.

As the attached Charts A and B illustrate, both SUNY and CUNY Community College students are paying the lion's share of operating costs of these campuses. Over the ten-year period from 2008-09 to 2018-19, SUNY Community College students went from paying 40.8 percent of the operating costs to approximately 41.4 percent. While the state's contribution for the same period decreased from 30.8 percent to 25 percent. We see a similar trend for CUNY Community Colleges during the same time period, where the student share increased from 32.3 percent to 40.6 percent, while the state share decreased from 28.9 percent to 23.7 percent.

In order for our campuses to maintain and enhance academic programming and supports, their state funding needs to be increased and stabilized. Even though enrollment on some campuses has decreased, operational costs have risen. As recently noted, SUNY Community College enrollment across the board has decreased by 5,684. Reductions in community college enrollments are related to an economy that is doing well, and a decrease in the state population that is projected to continue.

Our campuses rely on state funding to offer programs and student services that not only respond to current and future business needs, but will also attract potential students. In the absence of

predictable funding, campuses are forced to raise tuition and/or limit courses and programs, which diminish their appeal to future students and potential business partners.

The 2019-20 New York State Enacted Budget provided community colleges with the greater of a \$100 FTE increase or an established floor of 98 percent of the 2018-19 funding level. We appreciate the Legislature's work and continued support in including this language, which is a good step to help address issues related to declining enrollment at community colleges. While this year's enacted budget established a funding floor, unfortunately, it did not insulate all SUNY community college campuses from enrollment declines. A number of SUNY community college budgets will be lower than they were in 2017-18.

NYSUT continues to advocate for the adoption of a hybrid FTE funding methodology, as proposed by SUNY for their community colleges. During budget negotiations earlier this year, SUNY and NYSUT reached an agreement on statutory language to codify the hybrid methodology. The language and proposed hybrid methodology would provide SUNY Community Colleges with a greater of a level of support using a three-year average, or the FTE dollar amount for the college. This methodology change will provide our community colleges with some level of security and allow them to strategically plan for their future, as well as provide them with additional financial support, as outlined in the attached Chart C.

Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) Gap

Both SUNY and CUNY four-year campuses have been grappling with the growing tuition credit, which is an unfunded mandate that started in 2011, with the enactment of the tuition plan. 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.

As noted in the attached Chart D, you can see the rapidly rising cost of the TAP tuition credit, which now stands at nearly \$130 million for both SUNY and CUNY, and will grow to at least \$150 million in 2019-20.

It is our understanding that a \$200 tuition increase would cost each system an additional \$10-15 million. Campuses with high numbers of TAP students are penalized by the need to cover the TAP Gap without any state reimbursement. Existing law ensures that TAP students receiving a maximum award are made whole and provided access to CUNY and SUNY. Unfortunately, however, that access is compromised by the tuition credit. As noted above, the TAP Gap increases with every tuition increase, which is intended to cover the tuition credit along with other costs. Since the tuition credit has quickly grown over the years, institutions are left with less or very little money to invest in new faculty and other student initiatives to support on time completion.

When we have discussed the TAP Gap in the past, we focused on four-year campuses. However, this is becoming an issue at some of SUNY's Community Colleges, as tuition for the 2019-20 year has pierced the TAP limit of \$5,165. We raise this issue as we expect additional campuses to also exceed the TAP limit. While the law regarding the tuition credit only applies to four-year colleges, it is unclear who will be responsible for covering this difference at the community college level.

Ultimately, students are paying the price for the TAP Gap requirement. In order to mitigate a situation that grows with every tuition increase, and one that is starting to appear at community colleges, NYSUT urges the Governor and the Legislature to provide SUNY and CUNY four-year and community college campuses with state reimbursement to cover the full cost of the TAP credit.

Conclusion

For a number of years the executive and enacted budgets held SUNY's and CUNY's instructional core budgets relatively flat. Unfortunately for our students, this has been the case for far too many years and needs to be addressed. While funding for instructional core budgets has remained flat, operational costs continue to rise. Without funding to address these operational costs, including the TAP Gap, we are endangering student affordability and access to public higher education as well as the quality of the education they receive. A significant state

investment is needed to reverse this trend and to preserve and enhance the quality of education our students receive.

#47532

ARR/AB

Chart A

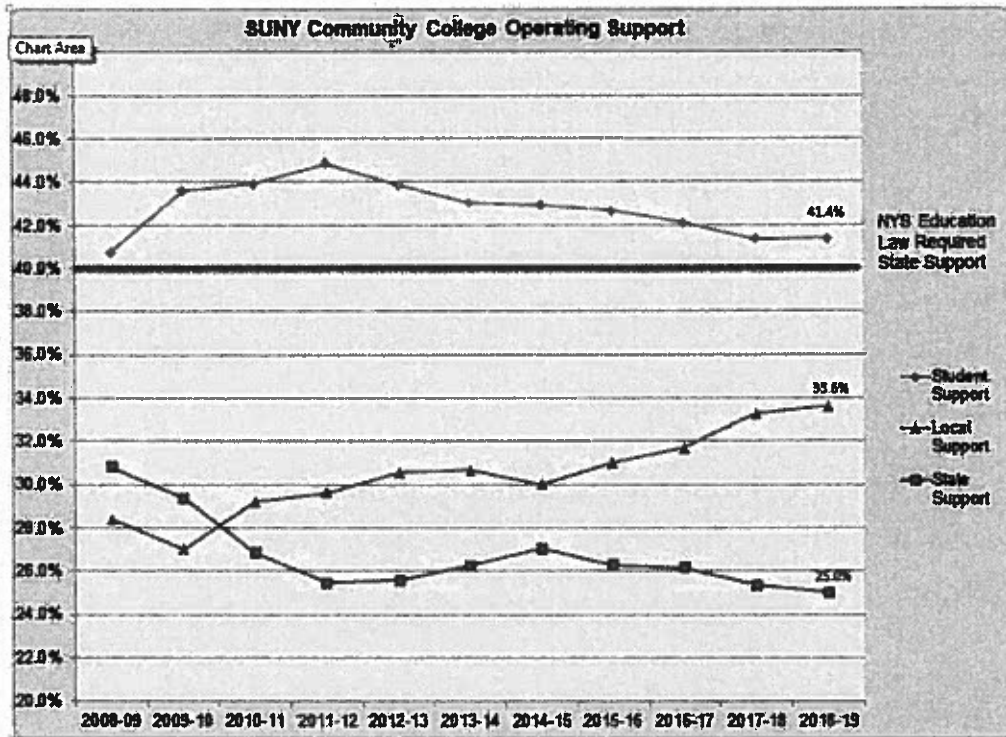


Chart B

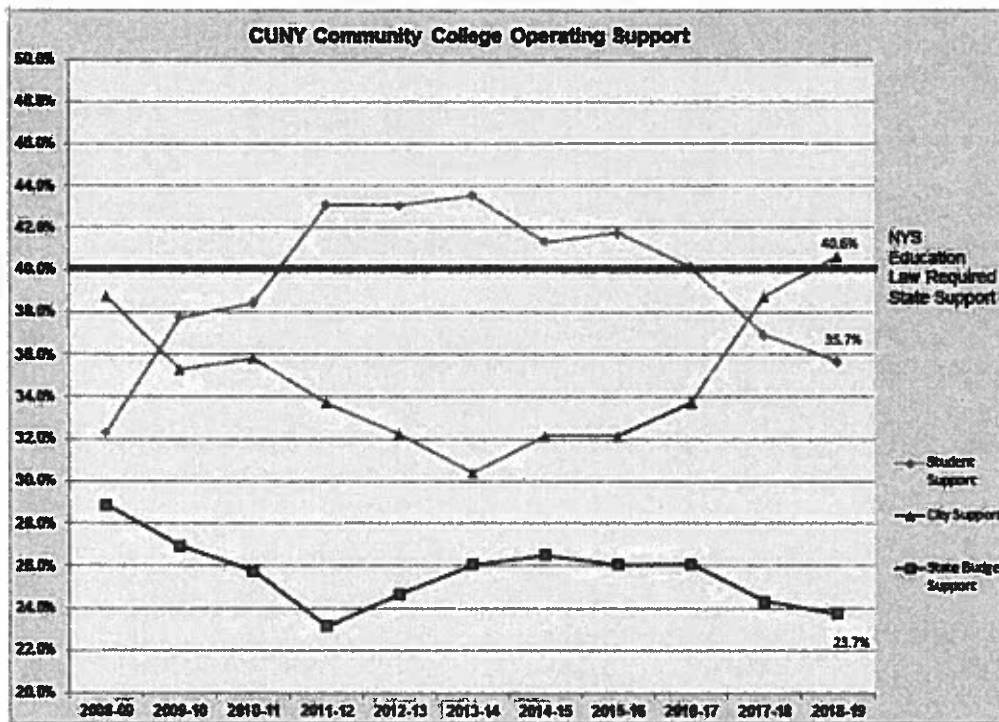


Chart C

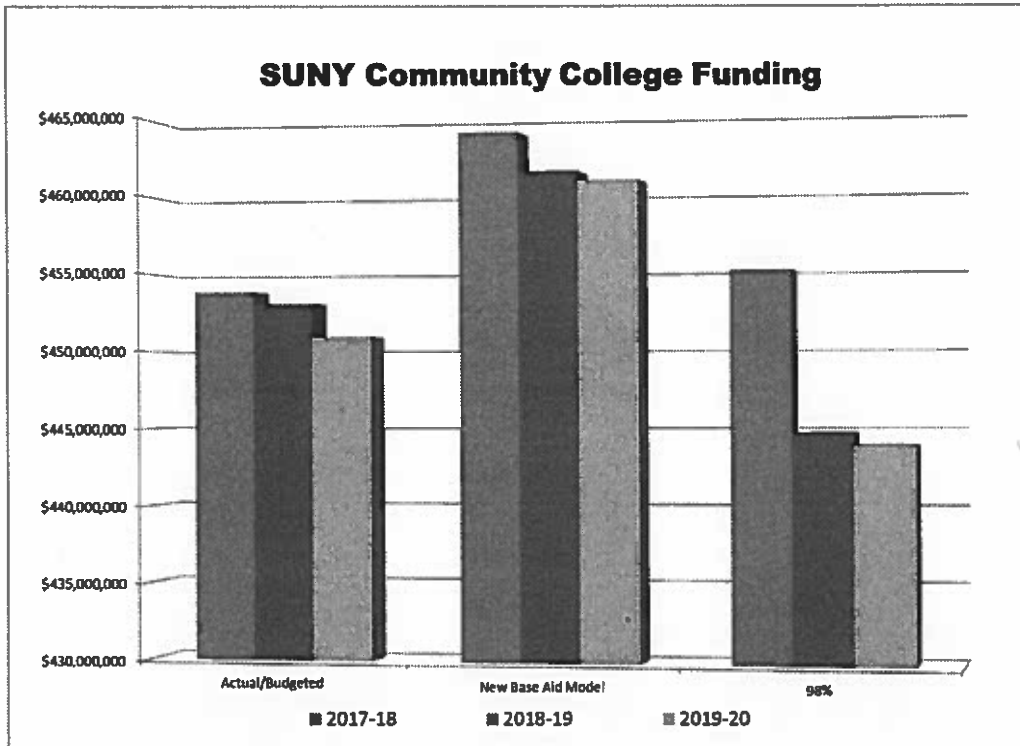
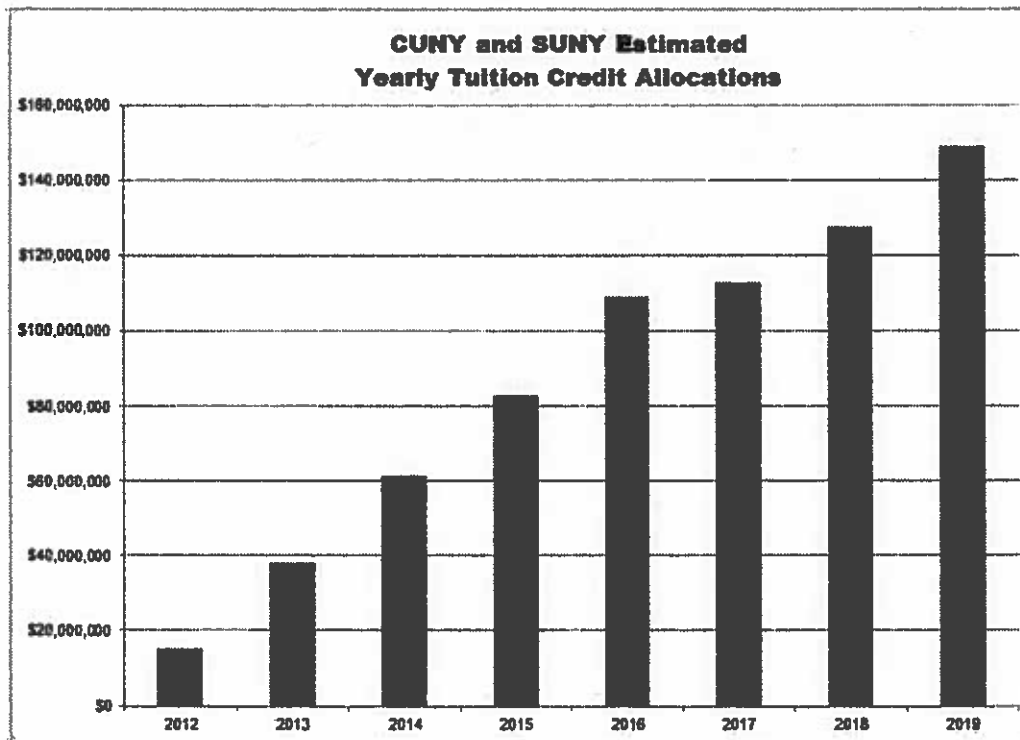


Chart D





University at Buffalo
The State University of New York

New York State Senate
Committee on Higher Education
Hearing
October 30, 2019
1:00 p.m.
University at Buffalo

Testifying on behalf of the University at Buffalo:

Beth Del Genio, PhD, Chief of Staff to the President

Lee Melvin, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management

Cheryl Taplin, Senior Associate Vice Provost for Student Success and Retention

Beth Del Genio

Good afternoon, I am Beth Del Genio, Chief of Staff to the President at the University at Buffalo.

On behalf of UB President Satish K. Tripathi, I would like to thank Chairperson Stavisky, members of the Senate, and legislative staff for allowing me this opportunity to discuss a matter important to all of us: ensuring access to an excellent education for all New Yorkers.

Impactful research, scholarly distinction, transformative student experiences, and far-reaching service to local, state, national, and international communities define UB's mission and core strengths as a premier research-intensive public university. UB is the largest, most comprehensive public research university in the SUNY system and is an internationally renowned center for academic excellence. In 1989, UB was the first public university in the Northeast to be admitted into the Association of American Universities (AAU), joining North America's other leading research universities.

At UB, we enroll more than 31,500 students and offer nearly 400 degree programs. We offer some of the nation's strongest graduate and professional degree programs including programs in our schools of Dental Medicine, Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Social Work, and Public Health and Health Professions. These schools are all ranked in the top 35 in the nation.

Our guiding objective is to excel in our mission-driven priorities. More specifically this means that our academic departments are among the very best in the nation. It means we are innovating in our undergraduate, graduate and professional education. It means our creative work inspires others and our discoveries improve lives. It means we are providing the best clinical care that is informed by research and we are working to end health care disparities in our community. It means we are attracting the best, most ambitious students. It means our faculty, students and alumni are engaged with their communities. And we are known—across the state, nationally and globally—for excellence across all of our enterprises.

Our distinguished faculty include approximately 1600 full-time members and almost 750 part-time members. UB is home to more than 150 research centers and institutes.

Today, UB is ranked 31st among public universities, according to *U.S. News and World Report*. In the category of best public and private universities, UB has risen 32 spots over the past eleven years—more than any institution in the AAU.

Clearly, we have made much progress in our undergraduate education, research and scholarship domains. Looking at important undergraduate education metrics, over the last 10 years we have seen an increase in retention and graduation rates, and in the number of students receiving national awards. We believe we have more work to do in this area including more robust technological interventions, enhanced student advisement, modern student living and learning environments, and additional student engagement opportunities.

It is our strategic intention that in the next decade we can situate UB in the Top 25 public research university in the nation. Ultimately, our aim is to have a greater impact locally, regionally, and across the state through our research, clinical care, graduates and our socially- and economically driven engagement with our communities.

In our research domain, we focus on leveraging our strengths for the most meaningful societal impact. Over the last several years, UB's research expenditures have grown and we have been successful in securing large center grants from the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation.

This past year, UB established the Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) Institute. With an initial focus on health and medicine, as well as autonomous systems, UBuffalo.AI is harnessing UB's artificial intelligence capabilities to advance core AI technologies, apply them in ways that optimize human-machine partnerships and provide the complementary tools and skills to understand their societal impact. Specifically, UBuffalo.AI is working to customize treatments to improve patient outcomes, and develop the next generation of autonomous and intelligent transportation systems. Chancellor Johnson recently nominated the Director of UBuffalo.AI, Dr. David Doermann, to the newly established State Commission to Study Artificial Intelligence and Robotics.

The intersection of research and clinical care has led to the Clinical Research Institute on Addictions (CRIA) to expand its focus on opioid addiction. Under the clinical leadership of UB's CRIA, UB launched Buffalo Matters, a program developed by UB emergency medicine physicians to expedite patient access to comprehensive and effective opioid use disorder treatment. The program is believed to be one the several factors contributing to the decline in opioid-related deaths here in Erie County. With support from the NYS Department of Health, the program is expanding across New York State. With additional support from the state, we believe we can combat this crisis that has destroyed lives, families and communities across our state.

The Jacobs School of Medicine and Biological Sciences is the backbone of clinical care and healthcare delivery in Western New York. And, the Jacobs School is the anchor of the thriving Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. The Jacobs School provides Buffalo General Hospital and Oishei Children's Hospital, as well as other Great Lakes Health hospitals, with the vast majority of their clinicians, including division chiefs and residents. These faculty clinicians/researchers bring their clinical research to the bedside.

The Jacobs School is training many of the future doctors of Western New York and New York State. Moreover, UB physicians are working to reduce health care disparities by enrolling more people of color and other underserved populations in clinical trials and working with other initiatives in the community such as the African American Health Disparities Task Force. With additional support from the state for the Jacobs School, we would hire necessary clinicians in critical medical areas which would in turn improve health care outcomes for all members of our Buffalo and regional communities.

UB and our affiliated entities generate an estimated economic impact of \$2.18 billion annually in New York State. Our university's total workforce of more than 6,000 full-time equivalent employees makes UB one of the region's largest employers.

Over the past seven years, the UB School of Engineering and Applied Sciences has experienced 62 percent increase in undergraduate students and a 55 percent increase in graduate students. Careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics are growing 2.5 times faster than any other field in the state. And, UB engineering plays a critical role in producing over 1,800 graduates each year. Many of the new high-tech start-ups in WNY are fueled by UB engineering graduates. New York ranks 36th in the nation in the 5-year growth rate of engineering degrees. Funded by two grants—one from the Cullen Foundation and one from the U.S. Department of Education—the UB Teacher Residency Program in UB's Graduate School of Education aims to recruit and train economically, ethnically, racially and linguistically diverse professionals for high-need positions in schools facing staffing challenges in the City of Buffalo. Launching its inaugural cohort in the summer of 2019, the program is expected to graduate 70 new teachers

over the next three years. After completing one year of co-teaching with a mentor colleague and coursework to earn a master's degree from UB, the residents will then be required to teach for at least three years in Buffalo public schools.

Recognizing the key role that a vibrant 21st century physical campus environment plays in enhancing education and research, we have implemented a long-range capital master plan for enhancing the Amherst, Historic Main Street, and Downtown Medical campuses and connecting them more effectively to their surrounding communities. Our Amherst Campus is the university's main undergraduate campus, and home to the university's primary athletics and cultural facilities. Our historic Main Street Campus currently serves as the primary health sciences campus and is being revitalized as a center for professional education. Our Downtown medical campus is home to the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and is the hub of our biomedical research.

As the largest and most comprehensive public research university in New York State, it is imperative that we continue our upward trajectory within a highly competitive environment, continue to ensure a world-class education for our students, and provide a modern built environment for teaching, learning and research. And, we ask that you continue the current five-year capital plan to support critical maintenance for our aging physical infrastructure and that you add capital funding for new academic buildings in high demand areas.

With your support, we can continue to be a local, regional and state-wide force for knowledge generation, sustainable economic impact and transformative clinical care for the citizens of New York State.

It has been a privilege to come before you on behalf of the University at Buffalo, and we look forward to working with all of you during the upcoming legislative session. I would be happy to take any questions.

Lee Melvin

My name is Lee Melvin and I am the Vice Provost for Enrollment Management for the University at Buffalo. I am in my seventh year at UB in this role, and I have over 28 years of experience in higher education at public flagship universities.

As the institution's Chief Enrollment Officer, I am responsible for designing, articulating, and implementing strategic enrollment initiatives to maximize enrollment at UB. I focus on undergraduate, graduate and professional student enrollment and work closely with the Deans, Vice Presidents and other Vice Provosts to recruit, enroll, retain and graduate a diverse community of student scholars at the University at Buffalo.

Today, pursuing higher education at public universities in NY requires financial investments by the student, the family, the institution, and the state.

Based on my experience in higher education, tuition and fees at NY public institutions is affordable for families ranging from low-income jobs to those making \$125,000 per year. Over 68% of registered undergraduate UB students receive some type of financial assistance. The state of NY has created and designed financial aid programs to assist students with the cost of tuition from a range of socioeconomic incomes.

UB is able to tell a great story about the affordability of tuition for our neediest students,

families and state residents and the deep financial commitment NYS had made to reduce the costs of attending our public institutions.

At UB, over 7,616 or 36% of our students are eligible for Federal Pell Grants to help assist with costs associated with tuition and fees. Of course, federal Pell does not have the “purchasing power” it once did for students at UB and as the White House and Congress negotiate reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, we hope that new support for Pell is made available.

Students eligible for Pell Grants usually have incomes below \$40,000. New York State’s Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) was enacted to help account for the difference between federal aid and the cost and tuition, and assists families earning up to \$80,000. At UB, 8,277 students receive TAP funding. We thank Governor Cuomo and legislators who, over the years, have made this possible.

With the creation of the Excelsior Scholarship, this year students from families earning up to \$125,000 can now attend public institutions tuition free. There are 1,868 UB students currently receive funding. Were it not for the Excelsior Scholarship, these students would have more financial challenges.

In total, UB’s current students, are receive over \$28,881,965 to reduce the cost of tuition. That is \$28.M less debt to amass for students and families pursuing higher education at UB.

Another positive financial aid program supported by the State, is the Foster Youth College Success Initiative. This award will fill in the gap for students who were in the foster care system.

UB remains affordable, accessible, and provides a quality education to students. The average undergraduate loan debt at graduation for UB students is \$4,600 less than the national average, and \$2,885 less than the average for all schools in New York. One way we measure the health of a UB degree is by loan default rates, and the loan default rates of former UB students are lower than the national rates, 3.3% versus 10.8%. Clearly, these numbers indicate that UB graduates are securing employment with salaries to help cover the costs of college loans.

In closing, I want to share a conversation I had with a butcher at one of the local grocery stores I frequent. We usually make small talk before I order my meats. He knows my profession and was excited to share that his son was admitted to UB and several other SUNY colleges. He was more excited about discussing news regarding the passage and implementation of the new Excelsior Scholarship program. He said that the Excelsior Scholarship would provide a lot financial relief for him and his wife. It would allow their son to attend any SUNY institution, and they were confident they could now afford his college education. I was proud of his son, proud of the father, and very proud that New York State could make college more affordable for this family.

As a professional in higher education, I strongly believe the University at Buffalo, the State University of New York and New York State remain committed to keeping the costs of higher education affordable to our students and families.

I look forward to answering your questions on the costs of higher education in NY.

Cheryl Taplin

Good Afternoon, my name is Cheryl Taplin and I serve as a Senior Associate Vice Provost for Student Success and Retention at the University at Buffalo.

Thank you Chairwoman Stavisky, Senator Kennedy and members of the Senate and legislative staff on affording me this opportunity to speak at this important public hearing.

The University at Buffalo has many assets that support student success and degree completion. The two that I will primarily focus on today are of our Finish in 4 initiative and the state funded Educational Opportunity Program (EOP).

UB has made significant improvements in graduation rates through our Finish in 4 initiative. Finish in 4 is a partnership between students and UB that provides students who take the pledge to graduate in 4 years, both the academic support and course availability to achieve this goal. In its first year of implementation, 43% of the entering class signed the pledge, now in its seventh year, 92% of entering students took the pledge and data shows that students who participate graduate at a higher rate than the university average.

Comparison Data:

- Overall fall 2008 entering freshman cohort had a graduation rate of 52.6%
- Overall fall 2012 entering freshman cohort had a graduation rate of 60.4%
- Those who signed the pledge in fall 2012 had a graduation rate of 63%.

Paula, who took the pledge in fall 2012 and graduated in 4 years with a triple major, stated, "Finish in 4 strengthened my focus on my goals for my academic career and provided the resources to guarantee my success." This clearly shows the power of students and the University working together to meet a goal that will reduce student debt and allow our students to go out into the world as productive citizens.

The Educational Opportunity Program has afforded access to those historically disadvantaged students who have demonstrated the potential to succeed academically and personally but needed a chance. At UB, we take pride in our EOP program. Our nearly 800 EOP students thrive at our institution and provide living testimony of their struggles to succeed. For example, Aliaya was one of the student recipients chosen for the 2019 Norman R. McConney, Jr. Award for EOP Student Excellence. Aliaya, plans to attend medical school to give back to her community. Marissa, another EOP student who lost all of her support systems through unexpected deaths, continued to find that determination deep within herself to persevere towards a career in nursing. Your continued support for programs like EOP speaks volumes and puts a support system in place for students like Aliaya and Marissa to achieve their dreams of becoming college graduates. The current 4-year graduation rate of our EOP program is 66%, well beyond the expectations that anyone could imagine.

Through continued financial support from Governor Cuomo and legislators we are able to provide services and programming towards student success, there are countless more stories of how direct support to students and the University at Buffalo have played a key role in student success. With your continued support, the University at Buffalo will continue on its path to excellence and share many more success stories such as these. Thank you for allowing me to address such an important topic.

October 22, 2019

To: New York State Senate Committee on Higher Education

From: James E. Mauck, Director of Athletic Bands, SUNY Buffalo

Regarding: SUNY Funding

Dear Members of the Committee,

I would like to thank you all for allowing me this opportunity to share my perspective on SUNY Funding and its impact on the students I have the privilege to lead and teach on a daily basis.

I am the Director of Athletic Bands at the University at Buffalo. I have a unique position on campus. I lead two of the largest student groups on campus, the UB Marching Band (140 students), and the UB Pep Band (80 students). Our students are dedicated, highly talented, and excel academically.

The University at Buffalo Marching Band students commit more than 500 hours of hard work and passion each season. This is in addition to their academic requirements. They dedicate their time and talents to create a band that represents our great University on campus and in the community. Many of these students also work 20+ hours a week to pay for the costs of attending SUNY. They are truly outstanding individuals!

My team and I also work hard to recruit students in to our program. Nearly half of the students we recruit decline the opportunity to perform in our ensemble because they need to work to afford tuition and the opportunity to study.

Some of our most dedicated band students will not remain in marching band until their senior year. The majority of students who leave do so for financial reasons. They need to work to close the gap between financial aid and tuition. They exchange their love of service to the University for the necessity to pay for tuition and fees. It is important to highlight that they are excellent students with an average G.P.A. over 3.0.

Consequently, some of our students soon realize that they cannot afford college and leave the university all together. I believe fully funding the Tuition Assistance Program is one step in reversing this trend.

Some facts I would like to share regarding the TAP Program:

- The TAP Gap- the difference between SUNY tuition and what TAP covers is a loss of \$65 million per year that campuses must absorb while providing a quality education
- More than one-third of students at SUNY campuses receive TAP
- SUNY's 2018-2019 tuition was \$6870. The maximum TAP award was \$5165. The TAP Gap was \$1705 per student- tuition loss to SUNY

- **The TAP Gap hurts our students and our campuses**

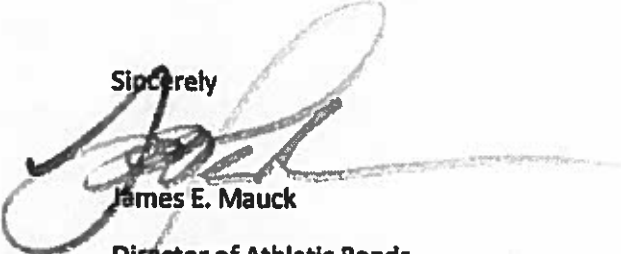
Let's close the TAP Gap! Underfunding SUNY is short sighted and in my opinion, not an option.

We have many dedicated and hardworking students who are team players. They dedicate their time and energy to better their campus and the communities that surround them. They continually strive to achieve the American Dream and should have every opportunity to do so. The students are not adverse to working hard, they just need an opportunity to focus their energy on academics and school service not on punching a clock. We need to work together to ensure we have leaders who will train and develop our ever-changing workforce.

Let us work to together to ensure that the future of our bright hardworking students is not compromised due to lack of funding.

Thank you again for the opportunity.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James E. Mauck', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James E. Mauck

Director of Athletic Bands

University at Buffalo

UNITED UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONS

Chairperson Stavisky and distinguished members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education, thank you for providing the opportunity for United University Professions (UUP) to testify at this hearing regarding the cost of public higher education in New York State, its effect on the Tuition Assistance Program and other important student aid offerings, as well as the affordability and accessibility of a SUNY education.

My name is Dr. Frederick E. Kowal and I am the president of United University Professions. UUP is the largest higher education union in the U.S., representing more than 37,000 academic and professional faculty and staff at 29 State University of New York campuses, System Administration, Empire State College, and SUNY's public teaching hospitals and health science centers in Brooklyn, Buffalo, Long Island and Syracuse.

Our members serve hundreds of thousands of students and patients at our colleges and universities, health sciences centers and state-operated public teaching hospitals directly administered by SUNY.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continuing support and approval of programs and initiatives that we see as vital to the students and patients we see and serve every day.

And as we seek to incorporate everyone into a diverse society and a prosperous state, I thank you for your support for SUNY's opportunity programs and your decision to vote to restore funds cut to these incredibly successful programs in the 2019-20 Executive Budget. We thank you and other legislators for your keen interest and support in closing the "TAP gap"—the difference in state State's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) aid and SUNY tuition that must be made up by colleges. Details about the situation follow further into this testimony.

And thank you for this chance to address the issue of funding for public higher education in New York state.

The cost of education

SUNY's mission statement requires the State's University to "provide to the people of New York educational services of the highest quality, with the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population in a complete range of academic, professional and vocational postsecondary programs including such additional activities in pursuit of these objectives as are necessary or customary."

Yet, access to SUNY is a major obstacle for thousands of New Yorkers, some of whom simply can't afford the cost of a SUNY education. Others don't receive—or don't qualify for enough—student aid and are forced to take out tens of thousands of dollars in student loans as they work toward their college degrees.

In its May report on student debt, the U.S. Federal Reserve reported that 54 million Americans took on debt—including student loans—for education. U.S. student loan debt surpassed \$1.6 trillion in 2019. Last year, 2 in 10 students who still owe money were behind on their payments, the Reserve report said.

In New York, the average student-loan debt per borrower expanded to 36 percent from 2007 to 2017, rising more than \$8,000 to \$30,899, according to report by LendEDU, a student loan finance company. Our state is No. 7 in LendEDU's ranking of the 10 states with the highest student debt.

Students must also factor in room and board, books, incidental expenses, lost income, and other related costs of attending college—which far exceed SUNY's tuition. Full-time student fees and room and board at SUNY state-operated campuses total to roughly \$19,000, more than two and a half times tuition. Tuition itself accounts for about a quarter of the total costs to students of attending college each year.

Lack of state support

As student debt rises, so does the percentage SUNY students pay for their education—in large part because of the lack of new state funding for SUNY. In 2007-08, tuition and fees from SUNY students accounted for 25 percent of SUNY's operating budget, with the state providing the rest of the funding. In 2019-20, students are paying 65 percent, with the state

chipping in the remainder. This is unfair to students and is unsustainable formula for SUNY.

SUNY's state-operated campuses have never recovered from a series of slashing state funding cuts that took place during the Great Recession; aid dropped from \$1.36 billion in 2007-08 to \$700 million this year—that's a decrease of nearly 50 percent, or a third of its core operating budget.

Of all state agencies, SUNY took the greatest hit in terms of budget cuts—and unlike other agencies, the University has never been made whole. Several years of flat funding for SUNY has only served to harm and financially hamper cash-strapped campuses even further.

These cuts have caused financial chaos at campuses like Fredonia, where the college last year considered cutting undergraduate and graduate programs to help close a nearly \$13 million budget deficit. In May, Fredonia officials proposed an academic reorganization that could help the college save about \$1.6 million which still leaves a large budget gap.

Stony Brook University, which faced a \$35 million deficit in 2017, instituted a hiring freeze. Last year, the university merged three foreign language programs into a single department, and suspended admission to undergrad programs in theatre arts, cinema & cultural studies, comparative literature, adapted aquatics and pharmacology. Binghamton University also ordered a hiring freeze in 2018 to help reduce a \$12 million budget gap.

In January, SUNY Downstate Health Science University's College of Health Related Professions was cash-strapped to the point where there wasn't enough funding for it to hire enough staff and faculty. This could jeopardize the school's reaccreditation.

The need for support

With proper state funding, SUNY's focus can move to expanding programs and hiring more full-time, tenure-track faculty, initiatives that will make the University more accessible to New Yorkers seeking a quality public college education. These moves will also help SUNY campuses attract—and more importantly—retain students.

One way to achieve that is by increasing funding for SUNY's successful Educational Opportunity Program. These are proven, life-changing programs that provide clear paths to a college education—and often, good-paying jobs—for those who might otherwise be denied access to college.

Through the EOP, students—many of whom are from some of the state's most economically distressed areas—receive specialized advisement, counseling, tutorial services, and summer programs. These students, who are mostly underprepared for college work when they enter the program, thrive in the EOP.

The EOP graduation rate exceeds 65 percent, exceeding the national average for public higher ed colleges and universities. More than 70,000 EOP students have earned SUNY degrees. And with smart, targeted investments in this critical program we can do even more.

Thirty-three percent of SUNY's state-operated campuses have EOP graduation rates ranging from 70 to 88 percent. Not surprisingly, the EOP is a program in high demand; SUNY annually receives more than 30,000 applications for just 2,500 available EOP seats. More funding will allow the programs to expand, increasing access to thousands more students each year.

TAP gap woes

More state funding is also necessary to close the TAP gap—the portion of SUNY tuition that campuses must waive for TAP awardees. The gap has swelled to \$70 million. TAP and other state financial aid programs help provide accessibility to a public college education, which is still out of reach for many qualified students.

About a quarter of students at state-operated campuses receive the maximum TAP grant of \$5,165—which covers only 75 percent of SUNY undergraduate tuition. SUNY campuses must cover the remainder out of their budgets. In many instances there is a correlation between the SUNY Campuses that accept the most TAP eligible students and our campuses that are facing financial shortfalls.

From 1974 to 2010, TAP covered 100 percent of SUNY tuition at state-operated campuses. But the gap has grown as state aid funding to SUNY has dropped. More than 40 percent of TAP students attend SUNY schools; over one-third of SUNY students at state-operated campuses receive TAP aid.

The TAP gap is equal to the annual salaries of over 500 new full-time, tenure-track faculty. These additional hires could increase advising, counseling, tutoring, and course offerings necessary for students to complete their education, and complete on time.

SUNY medical schools hurting

Our state-run academic medical centers in Brooklyn, Stony Brook and Syracuse hold dual roles—as safety net hospitals serving all who walk through their doors regardless of their ability to pay, and as teaching hospitals that provide accessible, affordable medical education to student doctors and medical professionals.

Both are important, and both require adequate funding to serve their students and the tens of thousands of patients they treat each year. Yet, state support for the hospitals was reduced in the 2019-20 budget due to the elimination of \$87 million of state operating funds in 2018.

Our hospitals rely on this funding—which was at \$153 million before the Great Recession—to help offset costs associated with caring for large numbers of underinsured and uninsured patients and fund the medical schools by more than \$200 million annually.

This show of support from the state wasn't without a price; in return for this funding, SUNY's academic medical centers pay for their employee fringe benefits and debt service costs, a total annual expense nearing \$500 million.

The elimination of this portion of operating funds will undoubtedly impact the ability of the medical schools to provide an affordable, accessible education to thousands of students each year. SUNY's state-owned hospitals do not turn a profit and shouldn't be expected to do so. That is not their purpose.

Without full state support, the hospitals will be hard-pressed to properly fund their medical schools, which attract most of their students from the Empire State.

For example, 83 percent of 180 students that comprise the University at Buffalo's Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Science's Class of 2023 are from New York state. Of those, 89 students are from Western New York and 33 earned their undergraduate degrees at UB. Those students were chosen from more than 3,800 students who applied to the medical school.

Founded in 1864, the Jacobs school is one of America's oldest medical schools. Development of the implantable cardiac pacemaker took place here, as did the Lippes Loop (the first Double-S intrauterine contraceptive device), advancements of treatments to slow multiple sclerosis and the country's first minimally invasive spinal surgery.

Focus on transparency at SUNY campus foundations

In February 2018, the state Comptroller issued a hard-hitting report that found that more than half of SUNY campus foundations haven't been audited by SUNY over the last 10 years. Of those foundations, two of them—the UB Foundation and the Stony Brook Foundation—control as much as \$1.1 billion in assets, which is more than half the assets of all the campus foundations combined.

The Comptroller found that contracts bid by the UB and Stony Brook foundations—including services for lobbying, fundraising and entertainment—were not bid competitively and were awarded based on referrals or companies they had worked with before. The report said that the UB Foundation paid nearly \$240,000 in salaries and fringe benefits to two retired UB staff members who returned to work, allowing the employees to bypass Retirement and Social Security law finance caps.

Since SUNY isn't auditing the foundations on a regular basis, the inner workings of these organizations are murky, to say the least. The public has a right to know how much money the foundations have, where it came from, where it's going and how it's being used.

Our cash-strapped campuses need help, and the foundations are doing precious little to provide that help, even though they were established to serve the academic missions of our colleges and universities. In fact, most people who donate to the foundations don't know—or realize—that these non-profit organizations are private; many believe they are donating to the campus.

The foundations use their SUNY affiliations to raise funds, which are invested in higher risk, higher reward investments. It helps them avoid regulation and transparency requirements that other state entities must adhere to.

UUP has been behind AO4367/S06275, which if approved would compel CUNY and SUNY campus foundations and their subsidiaries to submit annual reports and to post them on the SUNY website. Those reports would include financial information, contract vendor data, and a list of foundation and SUNY employees, including salaries, job titles and descriptions.

What we have now is a situation where the issue is not just the lack of transparency, but serious concern over how these hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent. These dollars should be used to help campuses and aid students in their pursuit of a college degree—and a better life. Making SUNY foundations accountable and transparent is a solid step toward making public higher education a priority again.

Conclusion

On behalf of the entire UUP membership, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

Our union appreciates this opportunity to provide the committee with detailed information to help it examine and address these important issues.

Our hope is that the information we've provided will help shine a spotlight on these problems and explain why it's imperative that the state make a solemn commitment to investing in the future of public higher education in New York state.

We greatly appreciate your time.

Thank you.

Testimony to the New York State Standing Committee on Higher Education

University at Buffalo Center for Tomorrow

October 30, 2019

Alfred State College is a campus within the Colleges of Technology Sector of the State University of New York. As such, it has historically been an institution which granted associate degrees, but which, for the past several decades, also granted bachelor's degrees in a number of subject areas. The Alfred campus of Alfred State College prepares students for careers in agriculture, architectural technology, biological science, business administration, computer engineering technology, digital media and animation, nursing, mechanical and electrical engineering, and other disciplines. One of the major objectives of the College is workforce development, much of which happens not only in Alfred but also at the branch campus in Wellsville, at which students can obtain degrees in automotive service, building construction, culinary arts, welding technology, and other majors. More recently, in Buffalo, Alfred State students are enrolled at the Northland Workforce Training Center, and Alfred State faculty offer instruction at the Burgard and McKinley High Schools. Alfred State College is truly making a real difference in students' lives and supplying a qualified workforce for companies in the region.

Although Alfred State College is a state-operated campus within the SUNY System, it has been the de facto community college in Allegany County. Alfred State College is also the largest employer in Allegany County, which is one of the most rural counties in New York state. Alfred State College promotes and positively impacts the economic vitality of Western New York, paying back many times over the state's investment in the college. The vast majority of Alfred State graduates continue to work and live in Western New York, contributing to the economic and social strength of the region. Alfred State stands today as the state's largest college of technology, and the only one west of interstate highway I-81. It is committed to excellence, access, diversity, affordability, and service to the state.

As is the case with other state-operated campuses in SUNY, Alfred State participates in the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), which at Alfred includes a Summer Prep Academy. In addition to the EOP program, the Alfred State Opportunity Program (ASOP) offers higher education opportunities to applicants with a recognized high school diploma or its equivalent who do not meet specified program requirements but who show potential for college success. ASOP is an extended program in which students may take an additional year to complete degree requirements. Associate-degree graduates may then enter directly into the corresponding baccalaureate degree program or the technology management BBA degree program, if desired. Coursework is paced to offer students an enhanced chance for success. The ASOP program allows for college preparatory and development courses (as needed), and other support services.

In addition to the Excelsior Scholarship and other forms of financial aid, Alfred State is proud of its commitment to recognizing outstanding students by offering numerous scholarships. It is the desire of Alfred State to award scholarships to as many students as possible. Scholarships are made possible by the generosity of the Alfred State Development Fund Inc., the Educational Foundation of Alfred Inc., the Alumni Council, private donors, and Alfred State faculty and staff.

These factors – the economic impact of Alfred State College on the region; the education that develops members of a workforce, many of whom remain in Western New York; and the scholarship opportunities afforded by the college to its students – all make Alfred State College a great investment for New York state. SUNY exists to provide opportunities for New Yorkers, build a strong workforce and engage in innovation. Alfred State College excels in each of these areas. Thirty-five percent of our students come from families earning less than \$30,000 per year, and Alfred State College excels at increasing the social mobility of students. We offer degrees to our students that will provide living wages and meet the demands of the workforce. Our retention and graduation rates are at the top of the SUNY Colleges of Technology sector. We are constantly engaging new strategies to support our students, and in the classroom, our students work on projects that will provide solutions to the challenges of the 21st century.

We have arrived at these successes despite a continued lack of resources. Our expenses, both operational and for salaries, continue to grow. Each college in the College of Technology sector must purchase the equipment required for various curricula, whether it is for radiologic technology and sonography, machine tool technology, heavy equipment for the light construction and heavy highway industries, or other degree programs. Technical programs cost substantially more to conduct than many liberal arts programs, and Alfred State College must have the resources necessary to continue educating members of the workforce of New York state. Increases to the Tuition Assistance Program would be invaluable to the operation of the College and the ability to obtain equipment required for degree programs in applied learning.

DRAFT

New York State Senate Higher Education Committee PUBLIC HEARING

Prepared Testimony

By

Philip L. Glick, M.D., MBA, FACS, FAAP, FRCS (Eng.)

President, Buffalo HSC Chapter of UUP

MBA Liaison for the University at Buffalo Health Sciences Schools and

UB School of Management Collaborative Programs, and

Professor of Surgery and Management

University at Buffalo, State University of New York

Academic Phone: 716-829-3714

United University Professions office: 716-829-2505

Email: glicklab@buffalo.edu or pglick@uupmail.org

Website:

[http://medicine.buffalo.edu/content/medicine/faculty/profile.html?ubit=glicklab,](http://medicine.buffalo.edu/content/medicine/faculty/profile.html?ubit=glicklab)

<http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~glicklab/>

<https://buffalohscuup.com/>

Twitter: @glicklab, @UUP_HSC_Buffalo

for

October 30, 2019, UUP advocacy town hall meeting

University at Buffalo Center for Tomorrow

North Campus

Buffalo, New York 14260-7400

My name is Dr. Philip Glick. I am a practicing pediatric surgeon. I am a professor of surgery and management. I teach in the University at Buffalo (UB) Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, and the UB School of Management. I am president of the UUP Buffalo Health Sciences Center (HSC) Chapter and I am the UB's Health Sciences Center Senator to SUNY's University Faculty Senate.

I am here today, in the spirit of true "shared governance," to ask Senator Toby Stavisky and her colleagues in the NYS Senate Higher Education Committee to assist us with four matters:

1. That you and your committee help Chancellor Kristina Johnson, the SUNY Administration, both houses of the NYS Legislature, and, of course, Gov. Andrew Cuomo, adequately fund the 2020-2021 SUNY base budget, with particular attention to eliminating the TAP Gap, eliminating the Excelsior Scholarship Program Gap, fully funding all negotiated labor contracts (Maintenance of Effort) and fully funding nonfunded mandates from the state, the federal government and our other accrediting bodies.
2. That you and your committee support the passage of and obtain the governor's signature on Senate Bill 06275, also known as the SUNY Campus Foundations Transparency Bill,
3. That you and your committee help UB and the Jacobs School of Medicine refinance the construction costs associated with our new, amazing and state-of-the-art \$375 million school, which had its groundbreaking in 2013 and which we occupied in the fall of 2017. In essence, we are asking for construction bond forgiveness on about \$12 million per year for the next 28 years.
4. And, that you and your committee help create the requisite environment to help SUNY's health sciences schools train the next generation of medical professionals to care for the citizens of NYS. At UB, these schools include the UB Jacobs School of medicine, the UB School of Dental Medicine, the UB School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, the UB School of Public Health and Health Professionals and the UB School of Nursing. In addition to the UB schools, we seek this help for the other three SUNY medical schools and their hospitals (Upstate Medical University, Downstate Medical Center and Stony Brook Health Sciences Center) and the SUNY College of Optometry.

SUNY Budget

It's budget time again, the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Executive Budget will soon be proposed by the governor's office, and the process will be moving into legislative action to develop the final enacted budget. But based on recent years' funding we are very concerned. SUNY's operating base budget has been flat for several years and its recurring maintenance budget has been chronically underfunded, even as all our campuses crumple.

The capital construction budget has been variable, but I am not here today to discuss this capital construction budget. Support for the three hospitals at the three SUNY health sciences center campuses is also an important priority, but because UB's Jacobs School of Medicine has no hospital, I will leave this out of my requests today.

UB's strategic plan is:

- build faculty strength, productivity and impact.
- recruit great students and fulfill their educational expectations.
- provide support structures ensuring faculty and student success.
- create a diverse campus community.
- become an increasingly global university.
- engage our local community to enrich student experience and regional well-being.
- Strengthen partnerships for improved regional health care outcomes.

All the details of this strategic plan require funding!

I want to focus on our operating base budget. As I stated earlier, the SUNY base operating budget has been flat, despite increased undergraduate enrollment, a growing TAP Gap; a growing Excelsior Gap; increases in contractual obligations, which, by the way, are negotiated by the Governor's Office of Employee Relations, but which the governor fails to fund; and a multitude of growing unfunded mandates that require the campus to meet to remain in compliance. And, an unanticipated feature of our current national immigration policy is that foreign master's student enrollment has declined. This was a large source of retail tuition income.

The TAP Gap is the growing difference between TAP funding for students and actual tuition costs. Prior to 2011, low-income SUNY and CUNY students would have their tuition costs covered in full by TAP, with colleges receiving adequate TAP payments to help cover costs for hiring new staff, funding libraries and investing in student support services.

But for every tuition hike since 2011, colleges have had to cover the difference between state TAP awards and the actual tuition cost for these students with reserves or actual loans from SUNY. The gap between what the state pays for TAP at SUNY and the City University of New York (up to \$5,000 per student) and the

actual cost of tuition— \$6,870 at SUNY and \$6,730 at CUNY—has left colleges grappling with a \$139 million shortfall in funding statewide and exhausting their reserves. The TAP Gap must be fully funded!

In 2017, Gov. Cuomo created the historic Excelsior Scholarship, a first-in-the-nation program that provides free tuition at New York’s public colleges and universities for middle-class families. In FY 2020, the Excelsior Scholarship will enter the third and final year of a three-year phase-in. For the 2019-20 academic year, the Excelsior Scholarship income eligibility threshold will increase, allowing even more New York students with household incomes up to \$125,000 to be eligible. To continue this landmark program, the budget includes \$119 million to support free tuition for an estimated 30,000 students. Along with other sources of tuition assistance, the Excelsior Scholarship and state tuition assistance programs will allow approximately 55 percent of full-time SUNY and CUNY in-state students, or more than 210,000 New York residents, to attend college tuition-free. Since Excelsior accounting lags a least one academic year, schools have been using reserves to fund this program. If Excelsior graduates fail to meet the post-graduate Excelsior requirements, this may create an even bigger gap, and collecting these accounts receivable is an unknown territory and may exacerbate the Excelsior Gap. The Excelsior Gap needs to be fully funded!

All of our campuses have seen university administration, from the presidential level, the provost’s level and the schools and colleges, become bloated with new hires, also known as administrators, to comply with unfunded mandates like the Americans with Disabilities Act; Title IX; Title IV, which deals with federal financial aid funds; the Clery Act, which deals with disclosure of campus crime; and others. These programs cost the campuses hundreds of millions of dollars and are unfunded mandates. These state and federal programs need to be funded with new dollars.

SUNY Foundation Transparency Bill (A06275)

In my opening comments today, I said that my remarks were in the spirit of true “shared governance.” As background, shared governance is a collaboration among faculty, staff, students, administration and governing boards. This collaboration includes but is not limited to: trust, collegiality, dialogue, mutual respect, sharing perspectives, listening, a shared sense of purpose, and shared accountability; always being mindful of diversity and inclusion; always remembering some of us have certain privileges and experiences in life that others have not; remaining humble, recognizing

differences while remaining open to finding common ground, and transparency of information. In essence, it boils down to “effective and constructive” engagement by the administration and trustees with the faculty, staff and students. Not just effective and constructive engagement, but also timely engagement. We need to be proactive, not reactive on important issues. We all need to be at the table. We need full transparency!

Transparency is at the core of everything we try to accomplish, and this brings us to the SUNY campus foundations. Let’s use the UB Foundation as an example. The UBF is a private 501(3)c entity, not subject to any of the public institution reporting and transparency that SUNY, the NYS Comptroller and UB require of their own finances. The foundation argues that it is a private entity, and that its donors may be reluctant to donate if their finances were subject to public scrutiny.

Interestingly, just last week the NYS Comptroller filed a report citing the UBF for about \$900,000 in potential financial and accounting irregularities. The response to these allegations was by UB Communications not the UBF, just showing how intimate UB and the UBF are. We don’t judge this, but comment on it to point out that the UBF is as public an entity as UB and needs the same financial and accounting transparency as any other state organization.

FYI A06275 does require public scrutiny of the financial dealings, but still protects the anonymity of donors. We again ask you to support the bill through the NYS Senate, with the goal of the governor’s signature.

Recent news reports of donors of high net worth giving anonymously to campus foundations have created terrible embarrassment for these institutions, when the donors become felons and it became known that the educational institutions were taking money from these individuals. Recent examples of this include Jeffrey Epstein and MIT, and the Sackler family with multiple institutions. Perhaps the bill should be amended not to protect donor anonymity?

This section is for the Committee members’ background reading

This bill includes:

- **Annual detailed financial reporting requirements of SUNY and CUNY campus foundations including the SUNY RF,**
- **Requires financial information and identifying vendor information of each contract, amount of the contract, purpose of the contract,**

- Requires a list of all foundation and state university employees by campus, department and location including salaries, job titles and descriptions and benefits.
- This bill does not require campus foundation to divulge their donors, unless the donors are also doing business or bidding on business with the campus.

Why is this important?

- UBF has greater than >\$1.2 billion in assets
 - By way of comparison
 - Privates: \$6.0 billion Harvard >\$30 billion, Yale >\$19 billion
 - Publics: Michigan >\$7.7 billion Cal
 - SUNY Binghamton >\$64 million, Albany >\$35 million
- ~ 28% of UBF annual spending, the spendable account, is for specific endowments as directed by donor
 - 4.6% for endowed chairs
 - 5.7% for professorship 19% for research
 - 14.7% for student scholarships
 - Small amounts for fellowships, student awards, student aid, libraries, lectures, and
 - ~52% for “general purposes”
 - These funds can be used by the unit designated by the donor
 - The biggest of these funds goes to CAS, JSMBS and the UBF BOT
- UB’s 2019-2020 operating budget, including direct state tax support, tuition, debt service, and fridge estimate, was >\$770 million
 - >97% are allocated and fixed for operations
 - ~1% major initiatives
 - 1% for tuition bonus
 - Bottom line, not much excess
- UB Foundation and extramural grants are a major reason why UB can excel!
 - Enables UB to achieve aspirational goals
 - Plays a leveraging role and extends the impact of other resources
 - Capital funds
 - Negotiated salary increase
 - No extension of Rational Tuition Policy
- Because SUNY Campus foundations and UBF specifically play such an important role in UB’s ability to achieve its goals, it should be

subject to more careful financial controls as outlined in the Senate S06275 SUNY Foundation Transparency bill.

Despite the claims by UB and the UBF that they are separate entities, as you can see, UB could not exist without UBF filling in its needs for scholarships for students, funds for programs, and supplements to various individuals on campus with the rationalization that state salary maximums for their jobs would not make UB competitive in a national market to recruit and retain the best and the brightest students, faculty, administrators and athletic coaches. We ask you and your committee to support S06275 to allow UB and UBF to continue their essential partnership. S06275 will allow all the UB community and the citizens of New York state to better understand UBF's financials and expenditures. Of course, this bill would require all campus foundations and the State RF to report similarly. And as we say at UB, it's not just about transparency, it's about shared governance.

NY S06275 has been stuck in the Senate's Higher Education Committee for several years. With a shift in democratic leadership and renewed co-sponsorship, this important legislation may be given fair hearings and a public vote.

We thank Senator Stavisky and many other of her Senate colleagues who have co-sponsored this bill.

Construction bond payment forgiveness for UB and Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences

In October 2013, Gov. Cuomo and Western New York community members hailed the proposed new medical school building on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Center as a milestone in UB's history and in the city's efforts to reinvent itself as a destination for world-class health care. The eight story, approximately 628,000 square-foot building is truly everything we wanted, except for the bond debt service. When the school was built, the financing for the building was unique in the SUNY system, but expediency was felt to be more important than traditional SUNY funding. Most capital construction projects in the SUNY system are fully funded with all construction costs, all furnishings and 10 years of building maintenance in the bank before a shovel goes into the ground. Our school was funded with 45% of the up-front cash dollars from State/SUNY construction funds and philanthropy already in the bank, and the remaining 55% of the construction

costs, about \$206 million, were funded through a 30-year mortgage financed by the sale of construction bonds. We love this building. It a game-changer for our students, faculty and staff. But since we moved into this building two years ago, our debt service is about \$1 million a month or about \$12 million a year—and that will continue for the next 28 years. This debt service is being paid by the Jacobs School of Medicine faculty. To the best of my knowledge, a SUNY building had never been funded in this manner. This \$12 million a year is interfering with our core mission, our ability to hire faculty, to do all the research we would like to do, to train students, and to start new programs, and it is weighing down the strategic plan of the school. I am here today to ask you to help us find state debt relief for these ongoing construction financing burdens.

To help create the requisite environment in which SUNY Health Sciences schools can train the next generation of medical professionals to care for the citizens of New York state

The vision, mission and goals of the UB Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences are similar to those of our other SUNY Health Sciences Centers and the School of Optometry. UB's vision is to educate, discover and to heal. Our mission is to advance health and wellness across the lifespan of the people of New York and the world, through the education of tomorrow's leaders in health care and biomedical sciences, innovative research and outstanding clinical care.

And our goals include:

- attracting the most promising individuals and supporting their development.
- enhancing our intellectual and technological environment to foster exceptionally creative science and education.
- Developing and maintaining excellent clinical programs to provide outstanding care.
- Cultivating excellence, collegiality and diversity.
- Observing the highest standards of ethics, integrity, professionalism and humanism.
- Applying advances in science, medicine and education to the betterment of humanity.

Current underfunding at the federal level, and particularly at the state level, are interfering with our trajectory of attaining these goals. Chronic underfunding has shifted hiring from tenure-track faculty to a majority of nonpermanent clinicians,

who do their best to provide excellence in patient care and teaching at various levels, but almost contribute nothing to scholarly activities. Scholarly activities are what really separate us, the practitioners at the University Medical Center, from our colleagues in the community private practice. Threatened cuts in federal and state Disproportionate Share Hospital funding is threatening the true existence of our SUNY hospitals, UB's affiliated hospitals in the Great Lakes Health Consortium and rural hospitals throughout the state.

In conclusion, I ask Chairwoman Stavisky and her colleagues to please be certain that this year the NY Senate Higher Education Committee helps the state's leadership to make the health care delivered to all of our citizens the very best possible—the very best in the world!

Thank you for your time.

October 21, 2019

Dear Legislators,

New York state employees who choose to participate in the Empire Plan PPO for their health coverage receive Beacon Health as a carved-out manager of any mental health or psychiatric health care needs.

According to the Empire Plan website, "The Empire Plan Mental Health and Substance Abuse Program, administered by Beacon Health Options, provides coverage for medically necessary inpatient and outpatient care through a network of participating providers; medically necessary non-network services are also covered. To ensure you receive the highest level of benefits, you should call Beacon Health Options before you seek mental health or substance abuse care, including treatment for alcoholism, even when a doctor refers you to the facility. Guaranteed access to network level of benefits is available if arranged through Beacon Health Options."

For many years, my experience with Beacon, and with state employees who have Beacon as their mental health manager, has demonstrated that, the above statement notwithstanding, Beacon is difficult for UUP members to utilize satisfactorily when they, or a family member, has a mental health need.

Repeatedly, over the past 8 years, I have witnessed fellow faculty at the University at Buffalo struggle to find psychiatric care for their loved ones in the Buffalo area, as they discover that none of the psychiatrists in the UB Department of Psychiatry accept the Empire Plan. According to the Chairman of Psychiatry at the University of Buffalo, this is because Beacon does not reimburse well, and makes the process of billing unduly onerous for physicians. More difficult than Medicaid.

Additionally, when faculty who are Empire Plan subscribers have a loved one who needs psychiatric hospitalization, they find that the only option for care is at a non-university affiliated hospital (BryLin Hospital or an outlying hospital at a greater distance, Niagara Falls Memorial Hospital or a hospital in Jamestown). None of these hospitals is staffed by University psychiatrists, and many in our community consider the care, as such, less than what they would expect from an academic faculty.

In some instances, faculty members insist that the mental health needs of themselves or their dependent be addressed at the university-affiliated teaching hospital: Erie County Medical Center. In such instances, they are billed out of pocket for their expenses. Typically, this equals over \$1,100 a day for inpatient care. A recent faculty member had a child hospitalized at ECMC for over a week. The cost, out of pocket, will approach \$10,000. While this may be manageable for a very few of our faculty members, it is not a cost that many can afford to incur, nor should any have to incur when they have a health plan such as Empire.

By no means is this a problem limited to Empire Plan subscribers in Buffalo. At the Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse and at the Stony Brook University Hospital, Empire Plan is not accepted for psychiatric care, for similar reasons.

I assert that quality care for the mental health needs of UUP members and their families should be as easy to access as quality care for other medical needs. This requires a renegotiation of benefits.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Dori Marshall, MD

**Director of Admissions
Associate Dean
Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences
955 Main Street, Room 1100F
Buffalo, NY 14203-1121**

UB|MD  PSYCHIATRY

**Associate Professor of Psychiatry
Associate Clinical Director of Psychiatry
11th Floor, Erie County Medical Center**

UUP Advocacy for the SUNY System

**Statement by Dr. Susan Udin, Professor of Physiology and Biophysics, Professor of Neuroscience
Submitted October 21, 2019**

I'm a Professor of Physiology and Biophysics at UB, and I've been on the faculty for 40 years. I can speak personally about various financial issues concerning UB from several points of view.

First, I speak as a faculty member in a department that has shrunk from what was a large and world-famous department down to a small and struggling group.

Second, I speak as the mother of a son who just graduated from UB and is now a doctoral student here. As such, I have seen the impact of underfunding from the students' point of view,

Third, I speak as a faculty member who has served on the UB Senate Budget Priorities Committee that has tried in vain to fulfill its charge to advise the UB Administration on the development of the university budget, with a major roadblock being the hidden functioning of the UB Foundation.

I will begin my remarks by discussing the increasing impact of what is known as the TAP GAP, the ballooning budget deficit that the SUNY colleges and universities are forced to cope with, by speaking specifically about how the financial challenges at UB have altered my department, the Department of Physiology and Biophysics in the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

When I arrived at UB in 1979, the then-independent Departments of Physiology and of Biophysics had a combined faculty of about 35 people. Now the united department has 14 tenured or tenure-track faculty, with 7 of those folks being over the age of 70. In other words, we've lost more than half of our size, and as people leave, retire, or die, few new people are being hired. This is a sad example of what has happened to a department that used to be world-famous, with a strong research, teaching, and graduate training reputation; this is what happens to a magnificent department when it is neglected and its financial resources are steadily drained, decade by decade.

As just one illustration of how our situation results in a poorer education for our students is that we teach large classes of hundreds of students without the aid of teaching assistants. Thus, we have no small-group weekly sessions devoted to reviewing the lecture material and answering the students' questions, or to going over the test questions to clarify why certain answers are correct and others are incorrect. I know from my own student days how crucial such small-group classes are in learning how to think clearly about certain subjects. We can't provide this to the several thousand students whom we teach each year.

The hollowing out that I've just described about the Department of Physiology and Biophysics is not unique. What's happened to our department has happened to other departments, too, across the university. We as faculty pay the price as our departments can no longer function optimally. We cannot serve our students optimally. In addition, Western New York and the

State of New York suffer in the long run when the research and educational mission of UB and the rest of SUNY struggle with inadequate resources because our state government fails to maintain the investment in our colleges and universities.

Next, let me make some comments about other impacts of underfunding on our students. Students clearly benefit greatly from TAP and Excelsior awards, but they nevertheless face 1001 fees. They have to pay transportation fees, activity fees, athletic fees, college fee, health service fee (which is not medical insurance), recreation fee, technology fee, campus life fee, transcript fee, and the amazingly named academic excellence fee. The basic fees in 2020 will come to \$1,726.75 per semester plus other fees such laboratory fees and even fees of over \$100/course for a program required for submitting homework. At a bare minimum, over 4 years, these fees will come to almost \$14,000, even if they don't increase and even for the students who never have to pay for homework programs or lab fees. Why so many fees? Why so large? For next semester, they will amount to a bit over half of what the tuition charge is. In reality, the fees are just another way to raise tuition. Personally, I surmise that the University keeps adding such fees because it is a way to compensate for the shortfalls in TAP and Excelsior funding.

So let's talk about what's popularly termed the TAP/GAP, which now includes the new Excelsior Scholarship. Students who are New York State residents and who meet the criteria can potentially, receive up to complete coverage of their tuition. Those pesky and ever-growing fees are not covered. The big problem for a university like UB, however, is that the money reimbursed to the university for TAP and Excelsior awards does not equal the tuition cost, so there is a gap between what UB should get for tuition and what it does get when a student has a full TAP/Excelsior grant. UB is left holding the bag for the deficit. From what I've been able to find out, here's how large that gap will be in the spring semester of 2020 for a student who receives the full Excelsior award:

Spring 2020

tuition:	\$3,535
Excelsior tuition;	\$3,235
GAP:	\$100

For a student who receives a TAP award but not any Excelsior funding, here are the numbers

tuition:	\$3,535
TAP tuition;	\$2,583
GAP:	\$ 952

The TAP gap began in 2010-11 with a small deficit of \$70, but has been increasing rapidly as tuition has risen but the TAP award level has remained almost constant, now being \$5,165/year. Assuming 8 semesters at the above levels, the gap comes to \$7620 per student. Thus, the more students we at UB educate under those circumstances, the less able we are to do our best because we have less and less money for faculty, TAs, equipment, classrooms, etc.

For SUNY as a whole, the TAP gap loss as a whole is about \$62 million per year! That's a lot of money, and it's taking a toll on every campus. More than 1/3 of SUNY students receive TAP

grants. For these reasons, **UUP urges the Legislature to add \$65 million to the budget to eliminate the TAP gap.**

Let me turn now to another large issue, the UB Foundation. UUP urges the Legislature to require campus foundations to submit annual budgets to SUNY for approval and to restore the state Comptroller's authority to audit the Foundations and ensure that their activities are in line with SUNY's mission statement.

For several years, I was a member of the UB Faculty Senate Budget Priorities Committee. Here was our committee's charge: *"This committee shall appropriately consult, review, report and recommend to the senate and shall advise the Senior Administration on matters concerning the development of the university budget and shall recommend criteria for the allocation for university budgeted funds related to the initiation, development, and implementation of the educational program."* We could never do our job properly because more than a billion dollars of the UB financial resources are hidden within the UB Foundation. There was no way to evaluate the UB budget when a colossal part was off-limits. The annual statement from KPMG is available, but the categories reported in that statement are so general as to be completely useless for actually understanding where a most of the money comes from and where it goes. Clearly, some of it is involved with the costs of building and maintaining UB housing – no problems there. In addition, there are funds established by individual investigators to facilitate their own research – again, no problem. However, there is no indication of what percentage of the Foundation funds consist of such funds; the annual statements don't provide useful breakdowns of the categories. Moreover, there are potentially worrisome categories such as the category of Expenses in 2017 of 36 million in salaries, fringe, and bonuses. Why are the UBF salary extras kept under wraps when our New York State salaries are not? Our state line salaries are public records – you can go on-line and find out exactly what the State pays all of us UUP members for our salaries. Is there something not Kosher hidden in the UBF salaries that requires them to be kept secret? The recent report from Comptroller DiNapoli indicated that that is in fact the case. To quote,

"In a judgmental sample of 19 of the 50 individuals, whose foundation compensation totaled \$1,683,909, we found insufficient justification (maintained by the campus, and not reviewed by UBF) for the compensation for two individuals whose total salary and fringe benefits amounted to \$239,743. One individual received a State pension of \$76,192 while also receiving \$118,696 in compensation from UBF for the same position. The supporting documentation UBF provided did not show any reasonable justification – it consisted of an email from the employee stating they wanted to retire from State service (State payroll), but continue in their current position and have their compensation funded by UBF. We also note that this individual was younger than 65 when they began collecting their pension, and was thus subject to the \$30,000 Retirement and Social Security law limitation on annual compensation for retirees who return to public employment. However, these limits did not apply in this case because the individual was compensated by UBF, rather than the University at Buffalo.

For the other individual, no employee agreement was provided and only a generic, one-page job description was given months after the initial audit request was made. Further, we note that, on

the copy of the description provided to us, the employee's name was handwritten on it, on what appeared to be a Post-It Note that was attached to the original document. Therefore, there is little assurance the compensation received by this individual, which totaled \$121,046, was necessary and justified. Foundation officials stated the campus decides the basis for compensating individuals and the foundation limits their review to ensuring the required approvals are in place. The foundation does not review employee agreements or other evidence to ensure the basis of the compensation appropriately supports campus programs and activities.

We also identified a University at Buffalo Division Director who received compensation and fringe benefits totaling \$119,565 from UBF, while also receiving a State pension of \$120,610. This individual also began collecting pension benefits before the age of 65 and therefore would have been subject to the \$30,000 limitations of the Retirement and Social Security law if the individual was being paid by the University at Buffalo.”

Further, the report states, “We sampled 50 individuals compensated by UBF for fiscal year 2014-15 and found that in addition to a State salary, 20 were paid nearly \$1.8 million by UBF. Four of these individuals each received salaries exceeding \$100,000 from both the University at Buffalo and UBF. For example, one individual received a State salary of \$351,438 while also receiving \$308,453 from the foundation.”

In addition to the extremely questionable nature of expenditures by the UB Foundation, these large supplements were hidden from view during the recent assessment of possible gender discrepancies in salaries at UB. Had they been available for inclusion in the statistical analysis, the conclusions of the study might have revealed gender discrimination which was not shown when only State salaries were included.

Most importantly, there is no way for the wider university to determine how much of the funds within the UB Foundation are being used for its stated established purpose, which is to further the academic mission of the university. This issue is critical at a time when so many departments across the university are struggling to maintain their faculty numbers and when there is a crisis in finding funding for graduate students.

Perhaps the decisions made by those who run the UBF are truly optimal, but perhaps they are not. The faculty and wider UB community deserve to be able to evaluate the situation.

Moreover, Comptroller DiNapoli's report states that the foundations are not bound by the changes in the 2016 Guidelines, which include requirements for the foundations' affiliates and a whistleblower policy. This situation clearly is undesirable.

For these reasons, UUP urges the Legislature to require campus foundations to submit annual budgets to SUNY for approval, to require the state Comptroller's authority to audit the foundations, and to create a new compliance unit to ensure that the foundations function in line with SUNY's mission statement.

Testimony
Frederick G Floss
October 30, 2019

Chairperson Stavisky and members of the Senate Higher Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify before you today on the future of Higher Education in New York and SUNY. My name is Frederick Floss and I come today to speak to you as the Chairperson of the department of Economics and Finance at SUNY Buffalo State, a Senior Fellow at the Fiscal Policy Institute and the Chapter President of the Buffalo State UUP Chapter.

First, with the best of intentions the legislature passed SUNY2020 with its rational tuition policy. The intent was to allow tuition to rise over time in a stable fashion. Unfortunately, several unintended consequences came with this tuition policy. To ensure that those who were receiving full TAP and Pell where held harmless tuition did not increase for them. The consequence is for campuses, like Buffalo State, with a large population of these students is a budget shortfall because tuitions do not rise as they do in the rest of the system. These shortfalls fall on campuses whose students have the lowest incomes and the most needs --- exactly the reverse of what the policy intended.

To make matters worse as budgets shrink, funds are shifted away from areas like campus housing and programs rising the out of pocket costs of the poorest students. Since these costs are not covered by TAP and Pell they fall to the students and their family to cover these costs with loans. This means for those students living away from home the financial burdens rise faster than other costs and then after graduation they must pay interest on these costs. In this way the rational tuition policy has hastened the student debt crisis in New York.

Second, SUNY2020 has allowed budget negotiations to put proper funding for SUNY and CUNY on the back burner. By assuming the tuition increases in SUNY2020 would cover any increased costs of the campuses no additional state funding has been added over the life of this legislation. This lack of state support is having a detrimental effect on Higher Education in New York, as you will hear from my colleagues testifying today.

Third, this lack of state support is having a negative impact on the economy of the state and future growth. 90% of SUNY students stay in New York after graduation. Using the Bureau of Economic Analysis data each Buffalo State graduate will make an additional \$4.4 million in earnings over their lifetime of which \$1.8 million will be spent locally, according to a Brookings Institute study. Using current tax rates each graduate will add an addition \$38,846 in state income taxes. In other words, additional spending on Higher education will pay for itself in future taxes.

Forcing students into lower paying jobs with increasing amounts of debt as they drop out of school because they cannot afford the increasing costs is becoming a crisis, simply because the state has relied on tuition, dormitory costs and fees increases to fund SUNY and CUNY is reducing economic opportunity for these students, and the state.

The problem is Higher Education is not a new fancy project and the benefits come only after students graduate and get good jobs. Putting investments into quick projects, like a new building, look good today but have very little economic impact. The opposite is true for higher education. From an

economic viewpoint increasing state support, so students can complete their education and reduce loan debt is the best way to ensure a growing state economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and thank you for coming to Buffalo.

Dear Senator,

As a staff member at Buffalo State College's Educational opportunity program I would like to personally submit a testimony for the harsh and challenging funding deficits faced by many of our students and college's operating budgets. Most of our EOP students heavily depend on State and Federal funding. Lately tuition and fees have risen and students are finding it challenging to pay their bills on a timely manner. A major contributor toward this issue is the TAP GAP. Campuses within the SUNY system have to absorbed the difference that have contributed toward budget deficits for institutions across SUNY to operate effectively. Other issues that have impacted students such as the elimination of the Perkins loan and decrease in scholarship funding.

Educational Opportunity Program students continue to perform well however due to funding inequalities, a number of students do not return after the first semester or the second year. This affects our retention rates, challenge to function departments effectively with lack of faculty/staff as well as assistance provided to support services. EOP students are those who have learned to persevere and give back to the communities. EOP students are active community members in our campus and take on leadership roles. EOP graduation rates have steadily increased above the national average of 68%. It is devastating for us to lose many students every semester due to the inability to pay for college. Many of our students support their families having part-time jobs and trying to make it to earn a college degree and have an rewarding experience.

Thank you for taking the time to review my testimony on behalf of SUNY, Buffalo State EOP students. Looking forward for a favorable reply.

Yours sincerely,

Jude Jayatilleke

Senate Hearing Statement for Wednesday, October 30, 2019, at Buffalo Center

Submitted by Sandra Lewis, UUP Active Retiree, Fredonia Chapter

The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) funding has remained flat since the 2013-14 school year, while college expenses have increased along with the rational tuition increases proposed by SUNY and the state. More than 40% of students receiving TAP attend SUNY. More than one-third of students at SUNY's state-operated campuses receive TAO.

Maximum TAP is \$5,165. Tuition is \$7,070

Even with full federal aid and maximum loans, which can provide \$5,500 for the year, students are left with a significant gap of \$2,100 a semester, and \$4,200 for the year. The EOP program helps with this, but students in families that have an expected financial contribution of \$0 based on the FAFSA are taking out \$5,500 in loans and having to cover \$4,000 in expenses in their first year on a residential SUNY campus.

This is a generic example, but is the norm for the majority of the students in EOP. Without the SEOG grant, the tuition credit, and EOP, those high-need students would not be able to afford to attend SUNY residential colleges. All of these programs are stopgaps or limited to special populations.

The TAP Gap is equivalent to the annual salaries for 800 to 1,000 new full-time faculty. These additional hires could increase advising, counseling, tutoring and course offerings to help students graduate—and graduate on time.

The only real solution to this is an increase in TAP to cover the gap.

Testimony for Higher Education Funding Hearings
Oct. 30, 2019 – 1 p.m.
SUNY Buffalo

With regard to transparency of SUNY Foundation Accounts:

While I applaud the idea of transparency, I urge the Senate Committee on Higher Education to proceed cautiously when considering more state oversight on SUNY Foundation funds. When I joined the faculty at SUNY Fredonia in 1987, approximately 80% of the operating budget was from the state. Currently, it is below 20% (I've heard numbers hovering around 16-17%). This paradigm shift in funding has forced campuses to seek other avenues and success oftentimes depends on flexibility. These foundation accounts afford that flexibility that traditional state accounts do not.

A personal example occurred several years ago. Two colleagues and I created Project PRIME (Professional Resources in Mathematics Education). The purpose of Project PRIME was to promote mathematics education for both pre-service and in-service teachers. One of our endeavors was to create a STEM camp for middle school students. Our M.S. students in Mathematics and Science Education could register for a graduate class where they serve as "camp counselors" developing and implementing STEM activities in a small group setting afforded by such a camp. We consider this to be a win, win, win situation. Our graduate students receive a unique experience developing such activities and implementing them in a STEM camp. The University receives both the money from tuition for the graduate course and recognition from hosting such a camp. The community benefits from a STEM camp targeting 6th, 7th, and 8th graders.

Instead of taking a salary, my colleagues and I arranged for the money to be deposited into a SUTRA account to fund other activities such as student participation at statewide conferences, etc. This was when we found out how restrictive such accounts were. Such an account could not be used for student support attending and presenting at conferences. After struggling with the restrictions of a SUTRA account, we finally decided to take a salary and deposit this into a foundation account. This account is much more flexible and suits our needs more than a SUTRA account.

In general, when attempting to provide rich, out of classroom experiences for students such as attendance and presentations at conferences, state accounts are not appropriate as they typically do not cover student costs. Campuses must rely on accounts that can cover such innovations. If the state legislature finds that there needs to be more oversight of such accounts, then it also needs to ensure that this level of flexibility still exists. Without this flexibility, campuses will be hard-pressed to provide these rich experiences for their students and serve their communities.

Dr. Robert Rogers
SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor of Mathematics

Robyn Horn

New York State Committee on Higher Education Testimony

My name is Robyn Horn, and I am a second-year Ph.D. student in Theatre and Performance at the University at Buffalo. I have come here to testify as to why should you invest in the future of Western New York. I can only start by telling you why I am investing *my* future in Western New York. Driving home from my first visit to Buffalo, I asked my future husband why we were living in New Jersey instead of Buffalo. In one weekend, we participated in a dance party for PUSH, a non-profit working towards sustainable housing, attended a performance at Ujima, a theatre company dedicated to celebrating the African-American diaspora, and toured city-wide mural projects. The people we socialized with were deeply invested in the growth and development this beautiful city. The truth is that my husband, a Buffalo native, *wanted* to return home after graduating from Princeton with a teaching degree. But at the time, Buffalo was laying off teachers, not hiring them. Buffalo didn't seem like a viable place to plan a future. What a difference 20 years makes.

Buffalo is not just surviving; it's thriving. New business and restaurants are opening regularly, the waterfront has become a popular destination, and, most importantly, for me, the arts community in Buffalo is vibrant and growing. In Buffalo, there are more than 20 professional theatre companies, a remarkable number for a city of its size. Compare that to 39 states in the U.S. that have two or fewer black theatre companies in the entire state¹. There are two in Buffalo alone: Ujima Theatre Company, which I mentioned earlier, and the Paul Robeson Theatre.

¹ Black Theatre Matters, blacktheatrematter.org

Additionally, there are theatre companies explicitly dedicated to Latinx, Jewish, Irish, and queer communities. Torn Space theatre is creating site-specific work at once-forgotten or maligned Buffalo landmarks, like its historic grain silos. Shakespeare in Delaware Park, which I performed with last summer, is the second oldest and one of the largest free Shakespeare festivals in the country². Unlike other free Shakespeare festivals in the country, which tightly control admission and seating, Shakespeare in Delaware Park is truly free; on any given night on the park, people who did not plan to see Shakespeare are drawn to the music and the crowd out of curiosity, and settle down in the grass for an impromptu evening of Shakespeare. This might include immigrant families planning to have a picnic, teenagers on longboards, or dog walkers.

How did Shakespeare in Delaware Park start? A young, newly minted Ph.D. moved to town to being teaching at the University at Buffalo and decided to start a free Shakespeare festival to serve this community. So many improvements in Buffalo - from art, to architecture, to medical research - have occurred because teachers or students have come to UB, or one of the other excellent colleges and universities in the greater Buffalo area, and have invested their talents and energies not just in their institution of higher education, but in the community. They do this because they see Buffalo's potential to be an exemplar of small American cities.

I lived in New York City for 10 years as a working actor, and I know how wonderful it is, but there is nothing like Buffalo with its can-do attitude and spirit of acceptance. In New York City, I was always hustling for a job. In Buffalo, I feel that I can become a job creator. In addition to

² Shakespeare in Delaware Park website, <https://shakespeareindelawarepark.org/about/>

my goal of getting a job in higher education, I have also considered starting a non-profit arts organization that uses the arts to forge connections between the city and the outlying suburbs.

When it came time for me to look at Ph.D. programs, the University at Buffalo was at the top of my list. UB is one of only two dozen universities at the vanguard of the field by offering a degree in Theatre and Performance studies. Performance Studies, a track which began at NYU in 1980, expands the meaning of "performance." The field examines the ways that gender, ritual, and yes, politics can be viewed through a performance lens. I am grateful every day for the education that I am receiving at UB. My program is genuinely interdisciplinary.

As an artist, I have collaborated with musicians and dancers to create original, research-driven work. As a scholar, I have taken classes in religion, gender studies, and visual arts along with my core theatre and performance curriculum and have created a network of artists and thinkers with whom I can collaborate with in the future. The top-notch theatre and dance faculty at UB have mentored and encouraged me to share my research at national conferences and to submit my work for publication. One of my essays has just been accepted for publication in the upcoming book *Theatre and the Macabre*, to be published in 2020. My diverse and accomplished cohort of graduate students is contributing to the field through performance and publication across topics as varied as performances of gender in Indian dance, robotics and artificial intelligence in performance, and the use of physical and devised theatre as a pedagogical tool for undergraduate education.

The MA and Ph.D. programs in Theatre and Performance studies, as well as the MFA in Dance, were founded in the past decade and continue to grow each year, and they are attracting students from as far as Shanghai and from right here in Buffalo to share in ideas and art-making. These students bring a wealth of talent and experience with them to Western New York. One student in my cohort was an actor in multiple Broadway musicals and national tours, another was a member of an internationally recognized dance company, and yet another is a playwright whose work has been produced at theatres in Chicago, LA, and New York City.

One of the remarkable things about this community is that, whether students are from Western New York or they came here for school, when students come to Buffalo, they want to *stay* in Buffalo. Many of the undergraduates that I have taught at UB have already begun working in Buffalo professional theatre, and recognize that they in Buffalo, can pursue careers in the theatre but also have a sustainable, balanced life. While acting at Shakespeare in Delaware Park, I met a young woman who came to Western New York from Brooklyn to attend college and originally had every intention of moving back to New York City after college. Not only is she now an active member of the Buffalo theatre community, but she is opening her own business in the Elmwood business district in the spring of 2020. I have also become deeply involved in the Buffalo theatre community, which has welcomed me with open arms. I, too, plan to stay in Western New York when I graduate from UB, so that I can give back to this community that has been so good to me.