

Higher Education

Providing the Necessary Operating Support for our Public Colleges and Universities

The Executive proposal reflects a new and welcome attitude toward higher education in New York State. The Governor includes \$1.33 billion in State support for State-operated campuses of the State University of New York (SUNY) and \$999 million for the senior colleges of the City University of New York (CUNY) in the 2007-08 State Fiscal Year (SFY). This reflects increased funding of \$148 million and \$71.8 million over SFY 2006-07 levels for SUNY and CUNY respectively. More importantly, the Governor does not call for an increase in tuition for students and their families. The Assembly has long called for the State to maintain its commitment to public higher education by increasing State support and keeping tuition levels low.

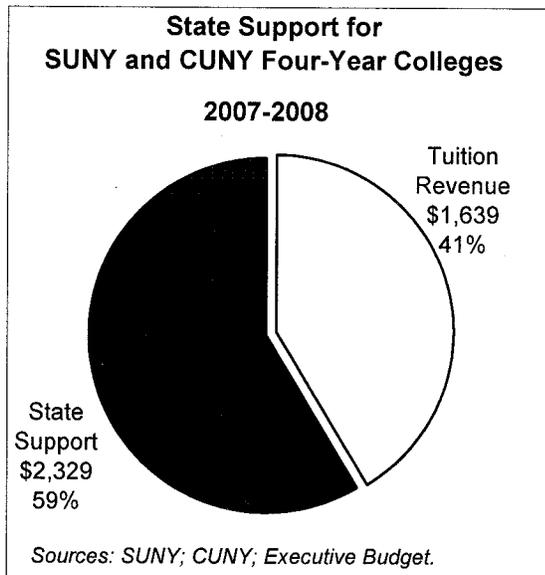


Figure 5

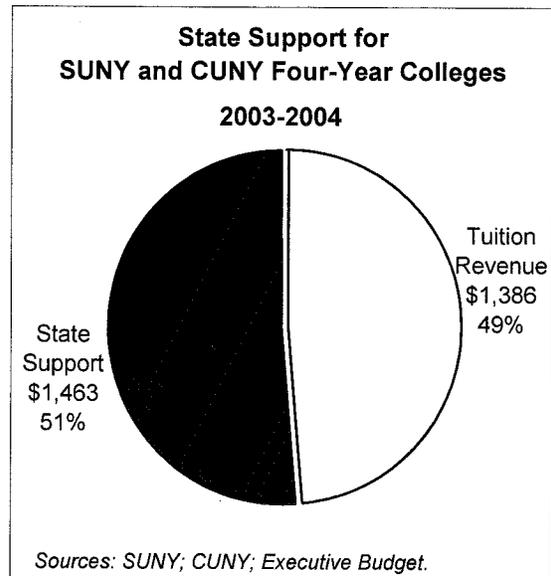


Figure 6

The increase in State support the Governor is making at both SUNY and CUNY is a positive step towards adequately funding operations at New York's public system of Higher Education (Figure 5 and Figure 6).

The Executive recommends a community college base aid increase of \$100 per full-time equivalent student, raising the level of State support from \$2,525 to \$2,625 for both SUNY and CUNY Community Colleges. As a result, State support for community colleges would increase by \$20.2 million at SUNY community colleges to \$445.7 million in the 2007-08 Academic Year, and would increase by \$6.3 million to \$169.7 million at CUNY community colleges in the 2007-08 Academic Year. Even with this increase, the State will continue to fund community colleges below the statutory guideline.

Developing a Plan for Growth and Change at SUNY and CUNY

The 2007-08 Executive proposal places an important emphasis on further development of the State's public higher education systems. Specifically, the Governor recommends providing new capital support of \$379.7 million for SUNY and \$265.8 million for CUNY in SFY 2007-08. The budget calls for the systems to prepare new five-year capital plans to commence in SFY 2008-09. The Governor also calls for the creation of a Commission on Public Higher Education to develop recommendations for our public colleges and universities to enhance the academic profile of SUNY and CUNY, improve access to a college degree for all New Yorkers and identify opportunities for our higher education system to promote the growth of the New York economy.

Providing Vital State Support for Student Financial Aid

Over the last twelve years Higher Education Opportunity Programs were repeatedly threatened by Governor Pataki's cuts. The 2007-08 Executive proposal maintains State support for the Educational Opportunity Program (\$19.58 million), the Higher Education Opportunity Program (\$24.2 million), SEEK (\$16.3 million), College Discovery Program (\$839,300), STEP/CSTEP (\$19 million), Liberty Partnership (\$12,018,000) and the Teacher Opportunity Corps (\$713,000).

Unlike Pataki-era budgets, Governor Spitzer's proposal does not include a recommendation for an across the board reduction in TAP awards. The Executive

provides \$857 million in State support for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) in SFY 2007-08, an \$18.7 million reduction in State support from SFY 2006-07 levels. While there is program growth attributed to the implementation of the new Part-Time TAP program enacted in SFY 2006-07, the growth is offset by \$30 million in savings resulting from the Executive proposal to discontinue the use of the Ability to Benefit Test (ATB) as a means for measuring academic eligibility for receiving a TAP award.