

Thank you Chancellor.

Good afternoon.

My name is Tom Mastro and I have the distinct honor and pleasure of representing the 465,000 students of SUNY as President of the Student Assembly.

The Student Assembly is the single recognized voice of our students – essentially the SUNY-wide student government.

In the same way all of you speak for your constituents, I speak for the students of SUNY.

Each of our 64 campuses elects a certain number of delegates, depending on their enrollment, who represent them to the SUNY Student Assembly.

And having been elected by my peers from across the entire system, my testimony in support of a renewal of NYSUNY2020 is being given, **not** on **my** behalf, but on behalf of **all** of my peers.

And it's worth reminding everyone here that the outcome of this discussion – and your vote – affects **me and my student colleagues here today more than anyone else in this room.**

Some critics have attempted to paint this support as “students standing in favor of tuition increases.”

I am **disappointed** by this interpretation, as it grossly misrepresents our position.

At the Student Assembly's Spring Conference last year, a resolution was put forth **supporting** the renewal of a **fair**, **equitable**, and **predictable** tuition plan.

This plan passed 59 to 4, with one abstention.

Let me repeat: 59-4-1 - A remarkable majority.

Even after **five years** of tuition increases, SUNY students – who were elected by their peers – voted overwhelmingly to renew the plan.

Our student leaders spoke with a **loud, clear, and unified** voice.

They said we cannot **afford** to be left in the dark

They said we cannot **afford sporadic and unpredictable** tuition hikes.

They said **we** want our SUNY system to **continue** on its path of extraordinary success.

The Student Assembly's support of this resolution **does not** come unconditionally, another point often overlooked.

The Student Assembly **would not** vote in favor of a plan which did not call for the **guarantee** of a **true State Maintenance of Effort**.

Yes, I recognize that you have maintained support as it was written five years ago

New York State has lived up to its statutory obligation...sort of.

But if the **students** are willing to invest more into their education, then **so too** should their **elected leaders**.

It is time that the state paid its fair share.

The Student Assembly supports a plan including continued commitment to ensuring that our tuition dollars stay on our campuses.

And the Student Assembly supports a plan that keeps the discussion surrounding our tuition within the body that best understands the needs of me and my 465,000 peers.

As a fellow elected representative, I understand how difficult it can be to explain certain decisions to your constituents.

But... A renewal of NYSUNY2020 is a renewal of fairness.

A renewal of equity.

And a renewal of predictability.

It is my sincere hope that you take that into consideration when making your final decisions.