

Good Afternoon Members of the New York State Legislature. My name is Greshawna Clement, and I am a senior at Medgar Evers College. I serve as the Evening and Weekend Vice President of the Student Government Association at Medgar, and as Vice Chair for International Student Affairs at the University Student Senate. I stand here today not only to advocate for myself, but as a representative of the interests of nearly 500,000 CUNY students.

At the start of the multi-year plan to increase tuition, the understanding was that with capital costs covered by the state, monies generated would go towards services that benefited students directly. Supposedly, these tuition hikes would improve programs and centers on campuses. However, this is not the case, as CUNY is operating on the backs of students by counting on tuition hikes to cover the cost.

The constant tuition increase has caused the TAP gap to increase and CUNY request funds from the State to cover this TAP gap. What sense does it make to raise tuition and then provide funds to make up for the TAP gap. Tuition should be frozen because our students cannot bear another 200 hike and this freeze would decrease the TAP gap. Since 2015, the budget of Senior colleges has been decreased by 1 to 2 percent yearly and this severely impact students experiences. With the budget cuts of senior colleges, the number of staff and faculty also decreases and cuts are made to the budget of student programs which causes students to not have that enjoyable experience of receiving a high quality education.

Opportunity programs such as ASAP, SEEK and ACE has statistically been proven to have helped thousands of students graduate on time. The executive budget points out that the state will invest on creating pilot programs. Why create pilot programs when we have working programs like ASAP, SEEK etc? Why not use these funds to restore the budget of these opportunity programs and enhance them.

The State of New York's priority should be to fully invest in Higher Education. Other than our opportunity programs, we need funding for mental health services. We also need funding for feminine hygiene products as CUNY is a predominantly

female university. Female hygiene products should be free and available to women students of CUNY. Why have it mandatory K-12 and not at colleges?

In addition, the number of students with Disability has been significantly growing in CUNY yet, the budget for students with disability services remains at 1.5 million dollars. This is not enough to cater to this demographic of students.

Moreover, the Child Care centers that were created to help our mothers in CUNY has received significant cuts to their budget to the point where students monies are being used to open these centers for example Queens College. The money that is being used to open the Child Care center is taking out of student activity fees and this is not fair to the students of CUNY.

We are calling on State Legislatures to fully fund the operating cost of CUNY, to restore the funding for opportunity programs and to invest in students services regarding mental health, feminine hygiene, students with disabilities services and others.