



**TESTIMONY
OF THE
NEW YORK PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP
BEFORE THE
JOINT LEGISLATIVE BUDGET HEARING ON HIGHER EDUCATION
FOR THE 2021-2022 BUDGET
FEBRUARY 4, 2020
Albany, New York**

Good afternoon. My name is Rob Zentgraf and I am the Chairperson of the New York Public Interest Research Group's (NYPIRG) student Board of Directors and a Pratt Institute student. 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 consists of college and university students elected from campuses with NYPIRG chapters across the State.

Even before COVID-19 struck, New York's students and public higher education institutions faced a persistent crisis. For years, New York State has severely underfunded CUNY and SUNY, pushing costs onto students and their families. Beginning in 2011, nearly constant tuition hikes have raised tuition by more than 42%;¹ Public college students have paid billions more as a result of scheduled tuition hikes at SUNY and CUNY.²

¹ 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%. <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.

² NYPIRG, October 22, 2019, "NYPIRG Estimates Tuition Price Tag For Suny 2020: Students Pay \$2.5 Billion In Additional Public College Tuition Payments," https://www.nypirgstudents.org/pubs/201910/higher_ed_news_merged_10-22-19_FINAL.pdf.

At the same time, the state has starved campus budgets through unfunded mandates and inadequate financial aid reimbursement, putting student support services and educational quality at risk. The state's premier financial aid program, the Tuition Assistance Program, no longer meets the needs of the 21st Century student and is in need of an overhaul, while other programs remain too narrow.

Now, as a result of the ongoing public health and economic crisis, we have seen faculty lay-offs, ballooning class sizes, alarming rates of anxiety and depression among students, rising food insecurity, and colleges pushed to the brink by financial uncertainty. As COVID-19 continues to threaten the health and safety of New Yorkers and devastate the economy, New York must commit to a higher education budget that meets student needs and supports a just recovery.

In a state as wealthy as New York, there is money to fully fund our public university systems, freeze tuition, and improve financial aid if those who benefit most from New York's economic system begin to pay their fair share.

We appreciate this opportunity to share our perspectives on the Governor's 2021-22 Executive Budget for Higher Education in New York State.

FREEZE PUBLIC COLLEGE TUITION

The Governor proposes to expand the state's so-called "rational tuition" policy – which automatically increases tuition at the State University and City University systems – for another five years.

NYPIRG urges the Legislature to reject the Governor's proposed extension of automatic tuition hikes. In fact, given New York's policy of shifting the burden of paying for college education from the state to the students and their families, it is critical for you to freeze tuition this year.

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 public colleges for full-time students in the fall and spring semesters. 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.³

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. 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.

³ *Supra* 2

NYPIRG urges the Legislature to reject the Governor’s proposal to extend automatic public college tuition hikes for the next five years and instead freeze tuition at current levels.

FULLY FUND CUNY AND SUNY: ELIMINATE THE “TAP GAP” AND ENHANCE THE MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT

The Governor’s Executive Budget proposes base aid cuts for CUNY and SUNY operating budgets, even as costs rise and historical funding gaps deepen. **NYPIRG urges the Legislature to reject Governor Cuomo’s proposed cuts of up to \$46 million for SUNY and \$26.2 million for CUNY.**

First, the state’s SUNY 2020 law de-coupled the maximum TAP award from public college tuition rates -- leaving the award virtually frozen while tuition rose -- and decreed that the colleges themselves would have to supplement financial assistance to the lowest income students.

As tuition has been raised, public colleges have had to dig deeper into their own resources – which have also been more or less frozen during this time – to provide necessary financial assistance. This deepening hole – the “TAP Gap” – has shortchanged CUNY and SUNY for years, starving campus budgets and putting student support services and educational quality at risk.

The best solution is to renew the state’s pledge to match the maximum TAP award to public college tuition rates. In the meantime, additional state support to public colleges is needed to ensure that financial aid made to the poorest college students comes from the state, not the individual college or other students’ tuition dollars.

Second, 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 a gap in state funding for mandatory costs.

Budget shortfalls at SUNY and CUNY campuses have led to hiring freezes, department elimination, and the erosion of student services and quality of education. Students have experienced firsthand 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. According to a CUNY survey, over one-third of CUNY students reported not being able to register for a course. Of those students, nearly 60% couldn’t register because the class was not offered at all or there were not enough seats available.⁴

NYPIRG urges the Legislature to stop state divestment in CUNY and SUNY by closing the “TAP Gap” and including predictable, mandatory cost increases in base aid funding levels.

⁴ City University of New York, “2018 Student Experience Survey A survey of CUNY undergraduate students,” <https://public.tableau.com/profile/oira.cuny#!/vizhome/2018StudentExperienceSurvey/CoverPage>.

BOOST STATE SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The job training and re-training for under-employed and unemployed workers provided by community colleges is more critical than ever as New Yorkers look to a post-COVID future. However, the Governor’s Executive Budget reduces base aid amounts by \$33 million at SUNY Community Colleges and by \$9.95 million at CUNY Community Colleges due to enrollment reductions. While base aid per Full Time Equivalent student remains flat, it has long been clear that New York charges one of the highest public community college average tuitions in the nation.

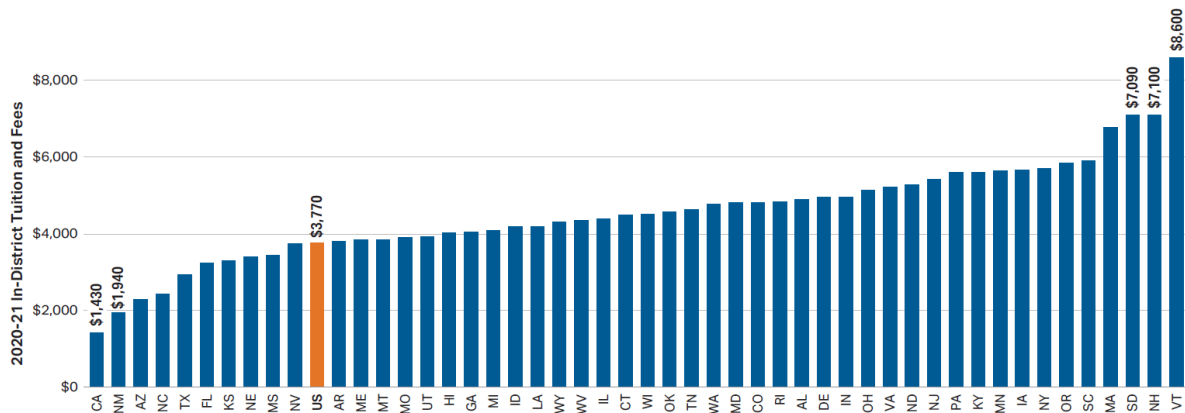
We urge the Legislature to reject Governor Cuomo’s enrollment-bound funding cuts and instead at least match community colleges funding to the tuition costs borne by college students, on a full-time equivalent basis, while setting a financial floor for covering community college costs.

The College Board annually publishes a national ranking of states’ average tuition and fees. New York State has historically been among the most expensive, ranking as the seventh most expensive in the nation in Academic Year 2020-2021, and growing faster than the national rate.⁵

Nationwide Comparison Of Average Community College Tuition & Fees

In 2020-21, average published tuition and fees for full-time in-district students at public two-year colleges range from \$1,430 in California and \$1,940 in New Mexico to about \$7,100 in South Dakota and New Hampshire and \$8,600 in Vermont.

FIGURE CP-5 Average 2020-21 In-District Tuition and Fees at Public Two-Year Institutions and 2015-16 to 2020-21 Five-Year Percentage Changes in Inflation-Adjusted In-District Tuition and Fees, by State



The rate of community colleges’ tuition hikes over the past decade far outstrips inflation. Every community college in New York State has increased tuition in excess of higher education inflation.⁶ And community college tuition increases have exceeded those allowed for the four-year

⁵ The College Board, <https://research.collegeboard.org/pdf/trends-college-pricing-student-aid-2020.pdf>

⁶ For tuition costs for the academic years 2010-11 through AY 2019-20, we relied on the National Center for Education Statistics (a federal agency) to obtain the data necessary to calculate our estimates. We used its Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.” Using the option to “compare institutions,” we obtained student population

public colleges. Since the first year of SUNY2020, more than half of the SUNY community colleges (16 of 29) and all CUNY community colleges had tuition rate increases that exceeded the rate approved for the SUNY four-year public colleges and universities.⁷

The state should be covering 40% of the costs of educating a student at a community college. However, there is a huge discrepancy between the tuition paid by students and the aid provided by the state. In the current fiscal year's budget, the state has pledged to provide \$2,947 in aid for each full-time student attending community colleges. None of the state's community colleges have tuition levels set under \$4,300, much less \$3,000. In fact, average community college tuition is above \$5,000,⁸ roughly 70% higher than the amount of state support.

Further, there are now community college tuitions that exceed the maximum TAP award. The maximum TAP award is currently \$5,165. However, while students who receive the maximum award are held harmless, colleges are reimbursed only \$5,000 per maximum TAP awardee. There are 16 community colleges that now exceed the \$5,000 maximum TAP reimbursement award.

Much of what ails the state's community college system is the result of a stagnating population, particularly among young adults. However, there are steps that the state can take to bolster support for community colleges and offset the cost borne by college students and their families.

NYPIRG urges the Legislature to fully restore the 20% “withhold” currently in place; provide per-FTE state funding that at least matches the tuition costs borne by college students, and set a financial floor for covering the costs of community colleges.

OVERHAUL THE TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR THE MODERN STUDENT

New York State's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) is a generous program that commits the state to aid the neediest college students—both in public and independent institutions. It is TAP that offers “free tuition” to the vast bulk of college students attending public college and contributes to the affordability of attending independent colleges and universities. In the nearly 50 years of TAP, the program has helped four million New Yorkers afford college.⁹ But a lot has changed since the program's founding in 1974, and TAP is behind the times. TAP grants haven't kept pace with

and tuition data used to do the calculations. The data was obtained at <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data>. Accessed September 2020. For tuition costs for AY2020-21, we reviewed each of the community colleges' websites to obtain current charges.

⁷ SUNY tuition for Academic Year (AY) 2010-2011 was \$4,970. 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 re-instituted annual tuition increases for AY 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 by allowing for three \$200 dollar increases, bringing tuition to \$7,070 at SUNY, hence tuition has increased 42%. SUNY community college tuition increased, on average, 43%. Similar increases were approved for the City University systems as well. Its community colleges also exceeded increases beyond those approved for the four-year college and universities within its system. Calculations performed by NYPIRG.

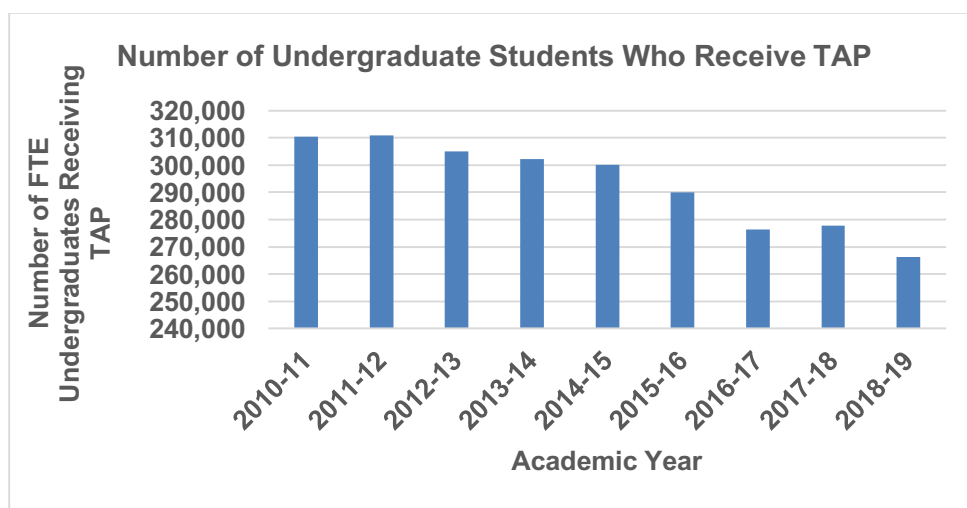
⁸ *Supra* 6

⁹ New York State Sen. Jose Peralta And Assemblyman Francisco Moya, “Make college more affordable by making more Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) grants available,” New York Daily News, November 10, 2014 New York Daily News, <https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/peralta-moya-students-tap-financial-aid-article-1.2003490>.

rising tuition, and student loan debt is reaching a crisis level: 2.4 million New Yorkers now hold outstanding student loans.¹⁰ Updating it would have significant social and economic benefits.

TAP should be realigned with the needs of the students and families of today. It should cover more of the cost of tuition for those who qualify and be flexible enough to meet the needs of all types of New Yorkers, not just the “traditional” straight-from-high-school-to-college full-time student that it was initially designed to serve.

When examined over time, it is clear that the benefits of the TAP program are dwindling. As seen in the chart below,¹¹ the number of undergraduate students who have been receiving financial assistance through the TAP program has been diminishing despite an increase in tuition and fees charged by colleges.



NYPIRG urges the Legislature to fix TAP:

- Increase the TAP maximum award to at least \$7,700 with corresponding increases for all those who receive aid.
- Increase the highest income level for TAP award eligibility. Merely keeping up with inflation would increase the minimum award from \$500 to at least \$750 and families with incomes of upwards to \$120,000 should be eligible.¹²
- Increase the number of semesters of TAP eligibility for all students, recognizing that the majority of students take longer than four years to complete a baccalaureate degree, and allow for summer and winter TAP awards.

¹⁰ U.S. Senator Schumer, “Schumer Announces Plan To Immediately Cancel Up To \$50,000 In Student Loan Debt Per Student Across Upstate NY; With 2.4 Million New Yorkers Owing Almost \$90 Billion, Senator Leads Charge To Take Immediate Action In 2021 To Attack Student Debt Crisis,” September, 2020, <https://www.schumer.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/schumer-announces-plan-to-immediately-cancel-up-to-50000-in-student-loan-debt-per-student-across-upstate-ny-with-24-million-new-yorkers-owing-almost-90-billion-senator-leads-charge-to-take-immediate-action-in-2021-to-attack-student-debt-crisis>.

¹¹ Higher Education Services Corporation, Annual Reports.

¹² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPI Inflation Calculator, https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm.

- End the \$100 per-year cut to students' TAP grants in their last two years of school.
- Eliminate the requirement that students attend college full-time for a year before becoming eligible for Part-Time TAP.
- Restore eligibility for TAP to students in default on federal student loans.
- Restore TAP grants to graduate students which were eliminated in 2010.
- Allow individuals who are currently incarcerated qualify for TAP grants so that they can earn a college degree.

ENHANCE OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS

Opportunity programs, which are designed for educationally and economically disadvantaged students, have a steady track record of success in increasing retention and graduation rates among the most at-risk students. The Governor's Executive Budget proposes flat funding for many opportunity programs but cuts CUNY's ASAP program by \$2.5 million and zeroes out funding for Bundy Aid, financial aid for private institutions, by cutting \$35 million.

We urge the Legislature to reject Governor Cuomo's plans to cut CUNY ASAP and eliminate the Bundy Aid program.

New York State has several opportunity programs: Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK), Linking Employment, Academics, and Disability Services (CUNY LEADS), Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP), College Discovery (CD), and others. These programs take a comprehensive approach to college access and affordability by building in academic counseling, mentoring, and often providing waivers for related costs such as transit, textbooks, and child care.

SUNY's EOP provides access, academic support, and supplemental financial assistance to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, many of them the first in their families to attend college. According to SUNY, graduation and retention rates of Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) students compare favorably to that of the general student population at comparable schools. First year retention, where a student re-enrolls for a second year, for SUNY senior college EOP students is 91% percent,¹³ whereas first year retention rates for the general student body at SUNY senior colleges is approximately 84%.¹⁴ The six-year graduation rate for EOP students is 73%,¹⁵ whereas the SUNY-wide senior college rate is 68% – similar results exist for opportunity programs found in the independent sector.¹⁶

NYPIRG applauds the Governor's decision to advance a budget that maintains funding of these important programs.

¹³ State University of New York's Office of Opportunity Programs, <http://system.suny.edu/oop/>.

¹⁴ Retention Rates for First Time, Full Time Students in a Program: SUNY Data Analysis and Trends SUNY System Administration Office of the Provost May 2014 Draft <https://www.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/powerofsuny/performance-management-system/DRAFT-Retention-Rates-Background-Report.pdf>.

¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁶ SUNY Fast Facts, https://www.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/FastFacts_2018-Flyer.pdf.

As you know, Bundy Aid provides unrestricted financial support to independent colleges and universities in New York State. The program has the following goals: (1) Maximize the total postsecondary educational resources of New York State; (2) Promote and foster the diversity of educational options in New York State; and, (3) Provide increased access to these programs by assisting institutions to minimize tuition increases.

Smaller independent colleges are facing serious financial difficulties and other challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. For example, recently Concordia College announced that it is closing¹⁷ and the College of St. Rose announced that it is eliminating 25 academic programs and laying off 20 percent of its tenured faculty.¹⁸

Now is not the time for the state to eliminate its support of New York’s independent college sector. NYPIRG urges rejection of the Governor’s proposed elimination of the Bundy Aid program.

CUNY’s ASAP assists students in earning associate degrees within three years by providing a range of financial, academic, and personal supports including comprehensive and personalized advisement, career counseling, tutoring, waivers for tuition and mandatory fees, MTA MetroCards, and additional financial assistance to defray the cost of textbooks. ASAP also offers special class scheduling options to ensure that ASAP students get the classes they need, are in classes with other ASAP students, and attend classes in convenient blocks of time to accommodate their work schedules. As students approach graduation, they receive special supports to help them transfer to 4-year colleges or transition into the workforce, depending on their goals. Graduation rates for ASAP students are more than double that of their peers who are not enrolled in these programs.¹⁹

NYPIRG urges restoration of CUNY ASAP, a program with proven success in increasing graduation rates and providing a holistically supported education to participants.

EXPAND CHILD CARE AT CUNY AND SUNY

CUNY and SUNY child care centers are a unique and powerful tool for socio-economic mobility in New York City. However, Governor Cuomo’s Executive Budget cuts childcare at SUNY by \$1.1 million dollars and by \$902,000 at CUNY. **We urge the Legislature to reject funding cuts to SUNY and CUNY childcare centers.**

¹⁷ See: <https://westfaironline.com/132495/concordia-college-to-close-in-deal-with-iona-college/#:~:text=Concordia%20College%20of%20New%20York,College%20will%20acquire%20the%20campus.&text=Most%20Concordia%20students%20will%20continue,according%20to%20the%20press%20release>.

¹⁸ See: <https://www.bizjournals.com/albany/news/2020/12/09/college-of-saint-rose-program-faculty-cuts.html#:~:text=The%20cuts%20include%20the%20college's,low%20enrollment%2C%20Saint%20Rose%20said>

¹⁹ City University of New York, “Significant Increases in Associate Degree Graduation Rates: CUNY Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) (March 1, 2018),” see: http://www1.cuny.edu/sites/asap/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2018/03/ASAP_Program_Overview_March_2018.pdf.

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.²⁰ 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.²¹

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

NYPIRG urges the Legislature to restore the \$1.1 million cut to SUNY child care and \$902,000 cut to CUNY child care centers.

EXPAND CAMPUS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

From isolation, to lost wages, and public health stress, the COVID-19 pandemic has compounded the anxiety and depression experienced by students. However, the Governor's Executive Budget provides no funding for campus mental health services. CUNY and SUNY need consistent adequate resources to mobilize a more robust university-based response.

NYPIRG urges the Legislature to restore \$500,000 in funding to hire new on-campus counselors and expand tele-counseling programs. Additionally, such programs must not burden students with additional fees.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES FOR LOW INCOME STUDENTS

Food insecurity was already an epidemic before the pandemic. Startlingly, the number of food-insecure New York City residents has doubled since the onset of the pandemic, from 1.2 million to nearly 2.2 million, roughly 25% of the population.²² Nearly 40% of Black families in NYC are struggling with food insecurity.

Food insecurity is also a problem that reaches our campuses. Over 57% of CUNY students reported that their ability to do school work decreased due to the coronavirus pandemic. The level of worry CUNY students have about running out of food because of lack of money is more than three times higher in 2020 than in 2018 and 54% of CUNY students reported a decrease in their own income due to COVID-19.²³

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 *Ibid*

²² AARP, Disrupt Disparities 3.0, <https://states.aarp.org/new-york/disrupting-racial-ethnic-disparities>

²³ CUNY Urban Food Policy, The State of Food Security at CUNY in 2020: An Assessment and Recommendations, <https://www.cunyurbanfoodpolicy.org/news/2020/05/20/the-state-of-food-security-at-cuny-2020>.

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.

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

Textbook costs are outrageous. Average costs are routinely \$1,000 a year. For the third year in a row, the State provided \$8 million to SUNY and CUNY (\$4 million to each system) for programs to make affordable textbook options available to students, such as open source textbooks. These are high-quality college texts with an "open" copyright license allowing the material to be freely accessed, shared and adapted. Open textbooks are typically distributed online at no cost and can be purchased in a variety of other print and digital formats at a low cost, including hard bound copies. On average, using open textbooks in place of traditional textbooks saves students 80%.

Open source textbooks have many similarities with traditional textbooks. The educational content is written and reviewed by experts, and it aims to cover a similar scope and sequence of topics. Many even come with support materials like online homework, test banks, and supplemental videos.

NYPIRG supports Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget funding of OER at \$4 million at SUNY and \$4 million at CUNY.

SUPPORT CAPITAL FUNDING TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS

Not only is it critical for institutions of higher education to have good environmental practices in order to mold young people into becoming good environmental stewards, but also because these institutions make up a large portion of New York State's economy. According to a report from Rockefeller Institute, SUNY alone has an economic impact of \$28.6 billion.²⁴ When institutions of higher education adopt good environmental practices, they have the potential to shape the economy and drive good environmental practices forward elsewhere in the economy.

In the face of the global climate crisis, there is a moral imperative for institutions of higher education to lead the path for a more sustainable future. New York's colleges and universities should be models for the rest of the state, and country, to follow. Additionally, students should be involved in college and university processes in shaping these policies.

NYPIRG urges the Legislature to support New York's colleges and universities to become these environmental models in the following ways:

²⁴ Schultz, Laura, "The Economic Impact of the State University of New York," Rockefeller Institute, November 1, 2018, <https://rockinst.org/issue-area/the-economic-impact-of-the-state-university-of-new-york/>.

- Reduce food waste by adopting measures to prevent putting out more food than what will be consumed, donating food, and composting.
- Reduce plastic waste by eliminating single-use cutlery, straws, and cups, and by not selling single-use water bottles.
- Lead on climate change by retrofitting buildings to be more energy efficient, electrifying buildings, investing in renewables, and switching to electric vehicles.

NYPIRG has long advocated for kicking off implementation of climate policies immediately on state-owned facilities and properties. SUNY alone makes up 40% of New York’s state-owned facilities.²⁵ New York can jump-start efforts to meet the goals laid out in the state’s Community Leadership and Climate Protection law by enabling SUNY and CUNY to retrofit their buildings to be more energy efficient, to electrify their buildings, and to invest in more renewables and electric vehicles and EV infrastructure. SUNY already has some positive policies through the “SUNY Clean Energy Roadmap.”²⁶ These initiatives should be fast-tracked and considered by private universities as well. At SUNY and CUNY, it is critical that additional capital funding from the State is provided for such efforts.

In conclusion, staff shortages, tuition hikes, and reductions in student services were already an escalating problem pre-pandemic. Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic runs through CUNY and SUNY, but New York’s public higher education institutions and financial aid programs need additional state funding to make it happen.

The State can save its social programs from suffering massive cuts without asking the most vulnerable -- and those suffering the most through the pandemic -- to pay for it. In addition to federal relief, solutions such as a Stock Transfer Tax, enhancing progressivity to the state’s personal income tax rates on the wealthiest taxpayers, and ending state subsidies to fossil fuel companies, among others, will improve fairness and generate new revenues. In order to provide a quality and affordable higher education for all New Yorkers, the State must commit itself to substantially increasing public funding this year and modernizing existing financial aid programs to meet students’ needs.

Thank you.

²⁵ “Master Capital Plan Report,” SUNY, <https://sucf.suny.edu/sites/default/files/docs/Final%20consolidated%202018%202019%20Master%20Capital%20Plan.pdf>.

²⁶ “State University of New York Clean Energy Roadmap,” SUNY, 2019, <https://www.nypa.gov/-/media/nypa/documents/document-library/cleanenergy/suny-clean-energy-roadmap.pdf>.