

1 BEFORE THE NEW YORK STATE SENATE FINANCE
AND ASSEMBLY WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEES

2 -----

3 JOINT LEGISLATIVE HEARING

4 In the Matter of the
2021-2022 EXECUTIVE BUDGET ON
5 HIGHER EDUCATION

6 -----

7 Virtual Hearing
Conducted Online via Zoom

8
9 February 4, 2021
9:32 a.m.

10

PRESIDING:

11

Senator Liz Krueger
Chair, Senate Finance Committee

12

13 Assemblywoman Helene Weinstein
Chair, Assembly Ways & Means Committee

14

PRESENT:

15

Senator Thomas F. O'Mara
Senate Finance Committee (RM)

16

17 Assemblyman Edward P. Ra
Assembly Ways & Means Committee (RM)

18

19 Assemblywoman Deborah J. Glick
Chair, Assembly Higher Education Committee

20

Senator Toby Stavisky
Chair, Senate Higher Education Committee

21

Assemblyman Erik M. Dilan

22

Senator John C. Liu

23

Assemblywoman Karen McMahon

24

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Higher Education
2 2-4-21

3 PRESENT: (Continued)

4 Assemblyman William Conrad

5 Assemblywoman Jo Anne Simon

6 Senator Diane J. Savino

7 Assemblyman Steve Englebright

8 Assemblywoman Patricia Fahy

9 Assemblywoman Rebecca A. Seawright

10 Assemblyman Al Stirpe

11 Senator Pete Harckham

12 Assemblywoman Alicia Hyndman

13 Assemblyman Harvey Epstein

14 Assemblyman Doug Smith

15 Senator Andrew Gounardes

16 Assemblywoman Diana C. Richardson

17 Senator James Gaughran

18 Assemblywoman Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn

19 Senator Shelley B. Mayer

20 Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenschon

21 Assemblyman Jake Ashby

22 Senator Gustavo Rivera

23 Assemblywoman Judy Griffin

24 Assemblyman Victor M. Pichardo

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3 PRESENT: (Continued)

4 Assemblywoman Vivian E. Cook

5 Assemblyman Mark Walczyk

6 Senator Robert Jackson

7 Assemblywoman Sarah Clark

8 Assemblyman Kevin M. Byrne

9 Assemblywoman Phara Souffrant Forrest

10 Assemblyman Garrett Gandolfo

11 Senator Jeremy A. Cooney

12 Assemblyman Robert Smullen

13 Assemblyman Steven Otis

14 Senator Peter Oberacker

15 Assemblyman John Salka

16 Assemblyman Kenneth Zebrowski

17 Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner

18 Senator James Tedisco

19 Assemblyman Mike Lawler

20 Assemblywoman Inez E. Dickens

21 Assemblyman Michael Reilly

22 Senator Phil Boyle

23 Assemblyman Philip A. Palmesano

24 Senator Joseph A. Griffo

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4 Assemblywoman Marcela Mitaynes

5 Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick

6 Assemblyman Jeffrion L. Aubry

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 10 President
 Association of Program
 11 Administrators for CSTEP and
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 13 Student
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 14 -and-
 Jean Halloran
 15 Policy Advisor
 Center for Food Safety 506 519
 16

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1 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Good morning.
2 I am Helene Weinstein, chair of the New York
3 State Assembly Ways and Means Committee and
4 the cochair of today's hearing.

5 Today we will begin the sixth in a
6 series of hearings conducted by the joint
7 fiscal committees of the Legislature
8 regarding the Governor's proposed budget for
9 fiscal year 2021-2022. And the hearings are
10 conducted pursuant to New York State
11 Constitution and the Legislative Law.

12 Today our committees will hear
13 testimony concerning the Governor's budget
14 proposal for higher education.

15 Let me acknowledge the members of --
16 the Democratic members of the Assembly who
17 are here. Senator Krueger, chair of the
18 Senate Finance Committee, will introduce her
19 members from the Senate. And then our
20 ranking members, respectively, will introduce
21 their members.

22 So we have with us the chair of the
23 Assembly's Higher Education Committee,
24 Assemblywoman Deborah Glick. We have

1 Assemblyman Conrad, Assemblyman Dilan,
2 Assemblyman Englebright, Assemblyman Epstein,
3 Assemblywoman Hyndman, Assemblywoman
4 Richardson, and Assemblyman Stirpe. I'm sure
5 other members will join us as we continue.

6 Senator Krueger, if you want to
7 introduce your Senate colleagues.

8 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you so
9 much, Assemblywoman.

10 Of course we're joined by the chair of
11 the Higher Ed Committee, Senator Toby
12 Stavisky. We're also joined this morning by
13 Senator Diane Savino, Senator Gustavo Rivera,
14 Senator Pete Harckham, Senator Robert
15 Jackson, Senator Shelley Mayer, chair of
16 Education. Those things seem to go together
17 all the time, higher ed and education.
18 Sorry.

19 Senator -- no, that's it for
20 Democratic Senators.

21 I would, if you don't mind, pass it to
22 Senator Tom O'Mara, my ranker on Finance, to
23 introduce his members.

24 SENATOR O'MARA: Good morning,

1 Chairwoman Krueger. Thank you.

2 We have been joined thus far on our
3 side of the aisle by Senator Peter Oberacker.

4 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: And before I go
5 to our ranker, we've also been joined by
6 Assemblywoman Cook, Assemblywoman Clark,
7 Assemblyman Pichardo.

8 And now I'd like to introduce the
9 ranker on Ways and Means, Assemblyman Ed Ra,
10 for introduction of his conference members.

11 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Thank you,
12 Chairwoman. Good morning.

13 We are joined by the ranking member on
14 the Higher Education Committee, Mark Walczyk,
15 as well as Assemblymembers Byrne, Smullen and
16 Gandolfo.

17 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Just before I
18 introduce the first witness, I just want to
19 remind the witnesses and the members that --
20 to keep your eye on the clock. It's
21 particularly important with the virtual
22 hearings; we've been having more
23 participation, which is good, but it also
24 extends the hearings. And we want to make

1 to ask a question, and the three minutes is
2 for the witness to respond. So it's three
3 minutes total for both question and answer.
4 So don't use your three minutes to ask a
5 question and then say what do you think,
6 because we will not have time to hear the
7 answer.

8 And if people adhere to the
9 guidelines, I think we'll be able to have a
10 really lively discussion today.

11 And with that, let me just -- I think
12 we've been joined by a few more members. So
13 I see Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon is here,
14 Assemblywoman Buttenschon, Assemblywoman
15 Fahy, Assemblywoman Forrest, Assemblyman
16 Otis, and Assemblywoman Seawright.

17 So with that -- and I'm sure as --
18 yes.

19 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you, one
20 more Senator, Senator Jeremy Cooney. Thank
21 you. And Senator Gaughran.

22 SENATOR O'MARA: And we've been joined
23 by Senator Jim Tedisco as well, on our side.
24 Thank you.

1 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

2 Sorry, Helene.

3 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: No problem.

4 And just for the members, we want you
5 to know that if you want to get on a list to
6 ask a question, you can use the raised hand
7 function on Zoom.

8 We also have enabled the chat room --
9 not to make comments, but if you have a
10 question about the order of the members or a
11 question about a contact information, please
12 feel free to use the chat. Or if you need to
13 explain why you need to take a little break
14 and to come back, we will -- I monitor that
15 as well.

16 So with that, we're very anxious to
17 hear from our new chancellor, Chancellor Jim
18 Malatras, someone known to many of us for
19 quite a while.

20 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you.
21 Good morning, Chairpersons Krueger,
22 Weinstein, Stavisky and Glick, and all the
23 members of the Senate and the Assembly, as
24 well as their staff. That clock of course is

1 intimidating as it ticks down, so I will go
2 quickly.

3 As a former legislative staffer, I
4 appreciate all that you do to put together
5 these hearings.

6 I am Jim Malatras. I'm the
7 14th chancellor of the State University of
8 New York. I'm honored to be the first SUNY
9 graduate to ever serve as chancellor. On
10 behalf of the Board of Trustees, I'd like to
11 thank you for the opportunity to discuss the
12 2021-2022 Executive Budget.

13 We have provided our full budget
14 submission to the members for consideration,
15 but today I would like to briefly address
16 several of those important issues.

17 Students are the lifeblood of SUNY.
18 Even in tough economic times as a result of
19 the pandemic, it is critical to protect key
20 access programs such as TAP, EOP and EOC. We
21 have made this our top priority and are happy
22 that the Governor has held these critical
23 programs harmless in the Executive Budget.
24 We are heartened by the Legislature's strong

1 and unwavering support for these programs as
2 well.

3 The pandemic has greatly strained our
4 students, and every dollar matters. That's
5 why we did not raise tuition this year,
6 though we would like to continue to have the
7 authority to make reasonable increases in the
8 future, and support the Executive's extension
9 of the Predictable Tuition program.

10 Our research and doctoral universities
11 are second to none and have done amazing
12 work, from developing the world's
13 number-one-ranked COVID-19 saliva test to
14 developing the next generation of lithium-ion
15 batteries to help combat climate change. We
16 support the Executive's budget proposal to
17 provide flexible tuition for these
18 institutions to continue to invest in
19 world-leading research while ensuring access
20 for not just disadvantaged students, but for
21 all SUNY students.

22 Because of your investment in SUNY,
23 resident tuition is significantly lower than
24 most other states, and with the extension of

1 predictable tuition we will keep it that way
2 and avoid the unforeseen staggering increases
3 of the past.

4 Because of the global health crisis,
5 students are struggling with social and
6 physical isolation, economic anxiety, and
7 academic normalcy. In September, SUNY rolled
8 out a comprehensive mental health and
9 wellness program called ReachOutSUNY,
10 expanding mental health and wellness services
11 for every student. But to ensure students
12 have access, we'd like to invest more in the
13 program, including additional telehealth and
14 peer-to-peer counseling.

15 Students are also struggling with
16 everyday expenses. Thanks to Governor Cuomo,
17 New York State is combating food insecurity
18 by expanding SNAP benefits to 75,000 SUNY and
19 CUNY income-eligible college students. But
20 only 23 percent of our eligible students take
21 advantage of this important program. To
22 increase use of the program, we now are
23 automatically helping enroll our EOC students
24 into SNAP. That's nearly 10,000 students,

1 and something we're very proud of.

2 Although this is an important step
3 forward, we're always looking for additional
4 investment to help meet the nutritional
5 demands of our students.

6 We must continue to rise to the
7 challenge of defeating COVID.

8 First, SUNY has produced tests and PPE
9 that are helping to defeat this virus. We
10 want to continue our work and welcome your
11 support of a new "SUNY COVID Response Fund"
12 to help expand critical healthcare capacity,
13 increase testing capacity, and to expand
14 much-needed PPE manufacturing in the State of
15 New York.

16 Second, we must support the critical
17 demand for additional healthcare staff.
18 We've seen a 21 percent increase in
19 applications this year at our four medical
20 schools.

21 New York State needs over 250,000
22 additional nurses by 2028, and we at SUNY can
23 meet that demand, but we lack the necessary
24 space, especially at our community colleges.

1 Therefore, we respectfully request
2 \$20 million to expand our clinical spaces to
3 meet that growing demand.

4 In addition, we are facing urgent
5 staffing challenges at our SUNY hospitals.
6 We are requesting authorization to
7 temporarily provide additional financial
8 incentives to retain our healthcare staff at
9 our SUNY hospitals.

10 Now more than ever, new jobs require
11 some type of post-secondary credentialing,
12 yet millions of New Yorkers, many who are
13 struggling for the next job or career
14 opportunity, have not completed college.
15 It's projected that 70 percent of all new
16 jobs in the United States will require
17 post-secondary education by 2027. Currently,
18 more than 2.2 million New Yorkers between the
19 ages of 25 and 44 have no degree.

20 The pandemic has caused real harm to
21 our institutions. Our enrollment overall is
22 down 5.3 percent year-over-year. However,
23 while the pandemic may have exacerbated our
24 challenges, it did not create them. Overall,

1 our enrollment has declined 16 percent over
2 the past decade.

3 We must adapt to the changing economic
4 landscape. This has only been accelerated by
5 the pandemic. This challenge presents an
6 opportunity, but we need your help. We've
7 announced a new campaign called SUNY For All,
8 where we focus on every segment of New York.

9 We recently launched a SUNY Online
10 Training Center that offers 20 free college
11 preparation and certifications in high-demand
12 industries, like healthcare and advanced
13 manufacturing, to those underemployed or
14 unemployed. Graduates are automatically
15 accepted with no application fee into any of
16 our 30 community colleges and two of our
17 four-year institutions.

18 The Governor in his State of the State
19 called for the expansion of this program, and
20 we'd welcome the Legislature's support as
21 well.

22 Second, we want to focus on emerging
23 industries that provide well-paying jobs.
24 One area is green jobs. Thanks to

1 Governor Cuomo and the Legislature, the state
2 has created ambitious goals to reduce our
3 carbon footprint -- and SUNY can fuel the
4 needed workforce for the state.

5 The state's \$20 million investment in
6 the Offshore Wind Training Institute is a
7 huge step forward, and we'd like to build on
8 that momentum by creating the SUNY Clean
9 Energy Workforce Academy, mobilizing colleges
10 from all corners of the state to create
11 academic, apprenticeship, and training
12 programs that focus on sustainability and
13 clean energy workforce areas in their direct
14 locations, and fast-tracking prospective
15 students to provide them with the credentials
16 necessary to meet the emerging workforce
17 needs in that area.

18 Finally, we must keep up with our
19 competitors if we are to thrive. For
20 instance, more than 50,000 New Yorkers are
21 enrolled in online programs outside of
22 New York, in many cases because SUNY cannot
23 offer the modern programs that they want.
24 Getting those students back will help with

1 our enrollment challenges.

2 Yet program approvals for high-demand
3 areas are met with a lengthy process. On
4 average, it takes 221 days before receiving
5 final approval for a new program.

6 In comparison, 35 other states have no
7 state-level approval. And in states that are
8 similar in composition to New York State, the
9 approval process ranges from approximately
10 40 days (Massachusetts) to 60 days
11 (Maryland).

12 We are already accredited by
13 independent bodies and have a robust internal
14 review. But we would like to work to
15 modernize the process in New York to reverse
16 our significant disadvantage, which results
17 in lost revenue for SUNY programs that
18 benefit students, and for New York.

19 But we're not just confronting COVID
20 and its many effects. The stress of cultural
21 and political division has frayed the social
22 fabric of this nation, and SUNY isn't immune
23 to the impact of it. We have a lot of work
24 to do to make SUNY more diverse, equitable,

1 and inclusive. Recently, we've appointed
2 several phenomenal diverse college presidents
3 at Old Westbury, Monroe Community College,
4 and Upstate Medical University.

5 But we must strengthen our career
6 ladders for our diverse faculty members. We
7 need to do more. With your help, we will
8 continue to invest in other areas as well,
9 like the recently created Hispanic Leadership
10 Institute. And we're finalizing an action
11 plan that will focus on things such as
12 developing curricula towards racial equity
13 and strengthening the role of the chief
14 diversity officer on every campus.

15 We're happy that the Executive Budget
16 includes substantial restoration of offsets
17 caused by the collapse of revenue, as well as
18 capital investments. Your continued
19 investment in SUNY has paid dividends for
20 millions of New Yorkers. According to the
21 Opportunity Study, 13 SUNY institutions rank
22 among the best in advancing economic and
23 social mobility.

24 While many things today are uncertain,

1 SUNY is not. We thank you for your support,
2 and I would be happy to answer any of your
3 questions.

4 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you. And
5 thank you for keeping mind of the clock.

6 Now we go to our Higher Education
7 chair, Deborah Glick, for 10 minutes.

8 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you very
9 much, Chancellor. Very happy to have you
10 here. I'm unmuted?

11 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: You are
12 unmuted.

13 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Okay, great.
14 What I'm going to do is cut off my video to
15 ensure that my bandwidth stays solid, or at
16 least not completely unstable.

17 The -- over the years, the TAP gap has
18 grown with each successive increase in
19 tuition. The predictable tuition that grows
20 at \$200 a year adds to the TAP gap. How
21 large is the TAP gap currently? And have you
22 and the board discussed with the Governor
23 changes that would help reduce that strain on
24 campuses?

1 time, there were frozen years without tuition
2 increases, campuses have resorted to using
3 fees. Now, as we've discussed privately, I'm
4 not concerned about a parking fee, but fees
5 for things that are integral to a student's
6 academic work -- a technology fee or the
7 like.

8 Do you have plans to work on reducing
9 fees and making them part of the tuition? As
10 we increase tuition \$200 a year, which is of
11 course the request of the Governor, is there
12 some plan to fold in those essential
13 fees that students can't avoid but need for
14 their academic work?

15 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you,
16 Chair.

17 The fees are something that I have
18 spent a lot of time on. Just on the
19 predictable tuition point, we're just asking
20 for authorization -- not that we would
21 increase tuition every year. The Board of
22 Trustees and I were very mindful of the
23 economic considerations of our students this
24 year, and we forwent our ability to raise the

1 tuition \$200. We convened with our
2 presidents and other leaders on campus to
3 have that discussion.

4 With respect to fees, the pandemic of
5 course has given life to a lot of these
6 issues. In many cases we worked with our
7 University Centers, they reduced some of
8 their fees upwards of 25 percent this year,
9 mindful of the students' needs.

10 I do think we would like to work on
11 rationalizing the fees. I think we've
12 discussed this in the past.

13 The issue of our research centers is
14 something that needs attention. If they are
15 going to be the sort of research innovation
16 juggernauts in the country -- and I think
17 they are already, but we can take it a step
18 further. Whether it's Stony Brook University
19 or Albany, Buffalo and Binghamton --
20 Binghamton is doing some fantastic work --
21 they have in many cases a higher fee
22 structure to support that research, but it's
23 not aidable. So that's something we'd like
24 to consider as well.

1 But we have taken great care, at least
2 over my short tenure as chancellor -- I began
3 at the end of August -- on reducing some of
4 the fees over the course of the pandemic,
5 especially when those services were not being
6 offered to students -- athletic fees being
7 some of those fees, transportation fees --
8 and then rationalizing the process overall.

9 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Let me go to a
10 couple of other areas.

11 Obviously, with the pandemic, we are
12 concerned about the increase in mental health
13 concerns and the strain and stress that this
14 has put on everyone, especially students.
15 And the -- there is a rather modest part of
16 the budget, the telehealth part, that is
17 actually cut in the Governor's budget. I
18 think you said you would hope to increase
19 that.

20 Again, have there been any discussions
21 in making that more available across the
22 system?

23 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: It's an
24 important point.

1 I -- one of the things I've done as
2 chancellor, I've met with I think about 50 of
3 the 64 student groups in the individual
4 campuses. And the issue that comes up time
5 and time again are mental health services and
6 wellness services.

7 It has been a difficult time for our
8 students, like it has been for all of us. We
9 are all convened on Zoom; I've never had a
10 budget hearing in my long career in
11 government in Albany via Zoom. It's an
12 interesting way of dealing with this. But
13 we're all adapting.

14 But if you think about what students
15 are going through, living on campus -- we had
16 to reduce density. They're largely living by
17 themselves. They don't have many of those
18 activities in person to connect them as part
19 of the college experience, and they're
20 struggling.

21 So we did come up with a really
22 comprehensive program in September and
23 October called ReachOutSUNY. This was
24 undertaken by the Board of Trustees, and the

1 Board of Trustees should be thanked for their
2 leadership on this issue. And it was
3 tasked -- it's headed by President Stanley of
4 Oswego and President Riley of SUNY Downstate.
5 But we came up with a comprehensive plan.

6 Telehealth hubs, using Downstate
7 Medical and Upstate Medical psychiatric and
8 other services -- an important step for our
9 students. They've many inquiries, I think
10 upwards of 500 or so inquiries and use of
11 those telehealth services.

12 We expanded the peer-to-peer network
13 services used by the University at Albany.
14 They're a wonderful peer-to-peer service, but
15 we want to expand those things.

16 We're doing training and we want to
17 expand our training, something students have
18 asked us for, especially training our RDs and
19 RAs in crisis management. Because we've had
20 situations, crisis situations on our campuses
21 that we've had to deal with. We would like
22 to have more investment in that. We think
23 the small investment that we've asked for is
24 money well spent. We have shown a tremendous

1 return on investment.

2 We're not asking for a lot of money on
3 this, but this is really important, the
4 overall well-being of our student body. And
5 without students, we're not really a college
6 system. So we're doing everything in our
7 power to expand those services. And any help
8 you would provide, we would absolutely take,
9 because our students really need it.

10 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Let me ask you
11 two more questions, as time is -- it's like
12 watching sand through an hourglass. Two
13 different areas.

14 One has to do with the withholding of
15 either transcripts or the preventing of
16 registration for small amounts of money. At
17 what -- you know, we'd like to understand
18 what the dynamics of that are and how much,
19 essentially, your receivables are in that
20 area.

21 And then the other thing I'd like you
22 to address is we're very happy that there is
23 some focus on green jobs. I think the
24 community colleges do a great job in

1 responding to what's happening in the world.
2 But how much would the Workforce Academy --
3 you know, how much money do you need to get
4 that going? And is there a plan for SUNY to
5 move forward with all of its capital
6 investments going forward in actually
7 employing green technologies?

8 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: So we'll
9 try to answer this, because I see the clock
10 ticking too.

11 On the green jobs side, I think this
12 is one of our most exciting areas, because
13 the future job growth is significant. I
14 think that is the future. I think they're
15 well-paying jobs. I think the Green Academy,
16 which brings together many of the important
17 programs that we have across the state
18 system, from our community colleges to our
19 four-year schools, could be between
20 \$2 million and \$5 million to stand it up in a
21 real and meaningful way.

22 The return on investment on that would
23 be huge, though. I mean, you're thinking of
24 tens of thousands of jobs being created in

1 the State of New York.

2 On the side of the capital investment,
3 I think you required, under the CLCPA --
4 which was a big step forward for the State of
5 New York on addressing climate change -- the
6 SUNY system had to reduce their carbon
7 footprint, the greenhouse gas emissions, by
8 37 percent, I believe by 2030.

9 We've already achieved a 40 percent
10 reduction in our system, so we take this very
11 seriously. I was president of Empire State
12 College, one of our new facilities that was
13 built in Saratoga, which used geothermal
14 power. So we're taking this seriously. We
15 want to decarbonize our electric system.

16 And we want to do something different
17 we haven't always done, which are use the
18 students that we're training in our various
19 programs to participate in the jobs that
20 we're creating because of the green energy
21 revolution on our campuses. I want to do
22 more as chancellor to connect those things.

23 And the final point on the fees, that
24 is something that is a concern to me. We

1 will get you the specific details. I think
2 it's in the realm of \$64 million of unpaid
3 fees, things that are impacting about
4 18,000 students. But many of our campuses
5 have been really mindful of not putting holds
6 on transcripts, not letting people suffer
7 economically because of the economic
8 considerations.

9 I did this at Empire State College
10 when I was still president in March, April
11 and May as well, of last year. So we've been
12 mindful of that.

13 But I will get you all the exact
14 details on it. But it's about \$64 million
15 and about 18,000 students.

16 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you very
17 much. I appreciate that. And I'm very sorry
18 for you being a Jets fan.

19 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: I --
20 well ...

21 (Laughter.)

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

23 And since we started, we've been
24 joined by a number of members: Assemblywoman

1 McMahon, Assemblywoman Griffin, Assemblyman
2 Zebrowski.

3 And in the Republican Conference, our
4 colleagues Assemblyman Smith, Assemblyman
5 Lawler, Assemblyman Reilly, Assemblyman Ashby
6 and Assemblyman Palmesano.

7 And now we go to the Senate.

8 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you very
9 much.

10 We have been joined by
11 Senator Gounardes, Senator Savino, Senator
12 Boyle, the ranker on Higher Ed, and
13 Senator Griffo.

14 And I confess I don't really follow
15 football, but I follow New York State, and I
16 think you just alienated everyone north of
17 Poughkeepsie. I'm not sure, but I think you
18 did that, Chancellor. So you'll have to make
19 up for that.

20 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: To my
21 defense, though, I am originally from the
22 great State of New Jersey, although I moved
23 to New York when I was just a wee lad of
24 6 years of age. But still, I feel like a

1 certain kindred spirit to my suffering
2 New York Jets in New Jersey.

3 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay, since we're
4 outing each other, I moved out of New Jersey
5 at age 17. I still don't follow the Jets.

6 (Laughter.)

7 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: But with that,
8 our chair --

9 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: You're a
10 happier person for it.

11 (Laughter.)

12 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: There you go.

13 Toby Stavisky, chair of our Higher
14 Ed Committee, to get us back on track. Come
15 off mute, Toby.

16 SENATOR STAVISKY: Okay. Am I
17 unmuted?

18 THE MODERATOR: Yes, we can hear you.

19 SENATOR STAVISKY: Okay, good.

20 I'm agnostic on the Jets and the
21 Giants. But Buffalo is the only team in
22 New York.

23 (Laughter.)

24 SENATOR STAVISKY: Chancellor, thank

1 you very much for joining us.

2 Let me ask you, as a first question,
3 10 years the state support for both CUNY and
4 SUNY combined was 46 percent. Tuition was
5 54 percent of the operating side of the
6 budget. Now, it's 32 percent. It went
7 from -- the state support went from 46 down
8 to 32, and the tuition increased from
9 54 percent to 68 percent, which to me is
10 trending in the wrong direction.

11 Can you discuss this?

12 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you,
13 Chair. And --

14 SENATOR STAVISKY: And perhaps even
15 more, the solutions?

16 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: The numbers
17 have trended in that direction. I do think
18 we -- as you're going to hear from many
19 people today, that they would want more
20 investment. I am not alone in that,
21 probably, of course, of folks.

22 I do believe, though, that we have an
23 ability to change our financial situation
24 where other sectors do not, through

1 enrollment and others things. And for
2 instance, so when you see 50,000 New Yorkers,
3 those are folks that should be at a SUNY
4 institution or a CUNY institution, for
5 instance. Chancellor Matos Rodriguez and I
6 work very closely. Many of his residents
7 from New York come to my schools; many of our
8 residents from upstate go to his schools.
9 We're losing those students. So we have an
10 ability to turn that around, I believe,
11 through enrollment.

12 I do believe that targeted investment
13 to show, to demonstrate to you return on
14 investment is important. I do think in this
15 current environment, where there are economic
16 challenges, as long as we're providing access
17 to our students -- that's the key piece for
18 us. That's why we asked for this first,
19 direct access and support to our students.
20 If we have students enrolled, we will thrive.
21 We can thrive on that basis. But when
22 students struggle and they can't maintain
23 their college activities because of economic
24 conditions or lost tuition assistance or lost

1 tuition support or scholarships, then we are
2 more harmed than ever.

3 So we're focusing on those areas where
4 we can really show value to our students,
5 reverse the enrollment trend.

6 The pandemic, as I mentioned,
7 exacerbated and accelerated some of our
8 decline, but our enrollment has been
9 declining for more than a decade. So we're
10 always looking for investment.

11 We would like targeted investment. We
12 mentioned some areas where we think we can be
13 a net benefit for the State of New York. I
14 think the clean energy space is a really
15 important area for us. I think the online
16 training, some of those high-demand
17 certificates, I think are really important
18 and will help. I think the healthcare
19 sector, that's one area of significant
20 growth. We've seen our applications actually
21 increase on healthcare enrollment. But we
22 need help with building out our clinical and
23 other space to meet that demand.

24 I think sort of -- certain targeted

1 investment is the way we'd like to go to show
2 you, as legislators, that what you're giving
3 to us is actual money well spent, and that
4 we'll do in a meaningful way. But we do want
5 to protect key access programs for our
6 students because we don't want them falling
7 further behind. EOP is an absolutely
8 important program, for instance.

9 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you. You
10 mentioned the healthcare aspect of higher ed,
11 which I know is growing -- the SUNY
12 hospitals, in particular. For a number of
13 years we've tried to get the state to absorb
14 the debt service; it's about 46 or so million
15 dollars. All of the other agencies -- and
16 I -- their debt service is paid by the state,
17 I understand.

18 What can we do to get the state to pay
19 that debt service for the SUNY hospitals and
20 relieve them of that expenditure?

21 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: I think the
22 state has taken on some of that debt. I'll
23 have to confer with my budget folks.

24 But we are proud -- and this is

1 because of the work of the Legislature as
2 well as the Governor. We're one of the few
3 systems where you pay for our fringe
4 benefits, you pay for a lot of our other
5 services that many campuses and public
6 systems do not have. And that is a
7 significant investment by the state, so we
8 appreciate that.

9 On the hospital side, especially on
10 the debt side, our hospitals have been
11 working very closely with the state as well
12 as with the federal government through this
13 pandemic, and through the stimulus actions,
14 to try to get some more federal money as
15 well. So we're going to be focusing on both
16 of those areas.

17 I think, Senator, you raised a good
18 point. Our hospitals have stood up and met
19 the challenges of COVID in a major way. Our
20 SUNY Upstate Medical University was not only
21 the folks who came up with the world-leading
22 saliva test, they're currently dealing with
23 COVID-positive patients and they actually
24 sent many of their staff to other hospitals

1 in the spring to deal with the challenges.

2 They didn't have to, but they did it.

3 SUNY Downstate took on being a
4 COVID-only hospital in the spring. Giving
5 back to the communities? That's a big thing.
6 And even the vaccine, which we're all hoping
7 that we get more of. The Pfizer vaccine, who
8 was the principal investigator of the Pfizer
9 vaccine? That was Upstate Medical
10 University.

11 So I think we've demonstrated time and
12 time again through our hospitals that public
13 SUNY hospitals can make a meaningful
14 difference, provide real support and care.
15 But any way we can get more resources to them
16 to keep doing all these phenomenal things, we
17 will work with you on.

18 SENATOR STAVISKY: Yeah, they are
19 producing. And I think we've got to
20 recognize our obligation toward those SUNY
21 hospitals and certainly the people who work
22 at them.

23 Let me get into a couple of other
24 areas. You mentioned in your testimony the

1 7 1/2 months it takes for new programs. And
2 we discussed this at some length not long
3 ago, how long it takes to get approval. What
4 do you think is causing that 7 1/2 -- I mean,
5 obviously it's a rhetorical question, but
6 what would you do in terms of speeding up the
7 process?

8 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: I do think
9 we have different layers of review that other
10 states don't. And this is not being critical
11 of any other agency that has regulatory
12 authority, but I think we've modernized.
13 When we were created in 1948, in many ways
14 they built many guardrails around SUNY
15 because they didn't want SUNY to grow at the
16 time. But now we're in a different place.

17 What we do is we have an internal
18 process. We have a shared governance model.
19 Any program that's developed on any campus
20 goes through a really significant review
21 process of our faculty and staff on campus.
22 It gets approved through their academic
23 approval committees.

24 Then it gets approved through our

1 state -- our SUNY system administration
2 process. That could take upwards of a year
3 as it is. Then it goes to the State
4 Education Department for an additional layer
5 of review. That is something that now
6 35 other states do not have. That slows down
7 the time.

8 But let me give you a real-world
9 example of like major areas of need that
10 we're trying to meet. For instance,
11 Downstate Medical is trying to get a nursing
12 education MS currently approved. It went
13 through the sort of year-plus review at SUNY.
14 It's now been waiting for 326 days at the
15 State Education Department. Still not moved.
16 That is now 400 days of waiting for a
17 dramatic need in nursing that we need to
18 provide.

19 Medical assistants at Sullivan
20 Community College. They need an AAS. That's
21 one area, medical assistants, we need more
22 medical personnel. That has been waiting for
23 241 days.

24 Disaster management's one of those

1 areas that we've been focused on because of
2 the pandemic. Buffalo State has had a
3 proposal at State Education Department for
4 263 days. That's on top of the year-plus
5 program.

6 What ends up happening is we lose out
7 to other programs. They're enrolling in
8 other schools outside of the state that don't
9 have these reviews.

10 We're accredited through an
11 independent body called Middle States. So we
12 have an independent accrediting body that
13 looks at us constantly, we have an internal
14 campus review process, we then have a system
15 administration process and then a
16 State Education Department process.

17 We need to just speed it up, or we're
18 going to keep that enrollment decline piece.
19 In growing areas we're not going to be able
20 to meet the nursing demand because of
21 clinical space challenges but also just
22 program expansion challenges.

23 I'll give you one more example of it,
24 Child --

1 (Overtalk.)

2 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: One minute
3 left.

4 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Sorry.
5 Child Advocacy Studies. One area where we
6 have a great teaching shortage right now is
7 in the pre-K space. Fredonia has an advanced
8 certificate program that's been waiting
9 250 days. We can't wait that long, because
10 we're not going to be able to meet the
11 workforce demands.

12 So that's what we're looking to
13 modernize and speed up a little bit.

14 SENATOR STAVISKY: Because I know
15 about the understaffing at the State
16 Education Department. They don't have the
17 folks to process these applications.

18 And you mentioned Fredonia, which is a
19 school which I visited many years ago for a
20 committee hearing.

21 And the process I think has to be
22 improved, but I'm not sure the Governor's
23 solution is the best.

24 One quick question. What is the

1 full-time-faculty ratio?

2 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: That
3 depends, Senator, on the campus. And many of
4 our -- so if you take our University Centers,
5 it's about 80/20. But if you take our
6 community colleges, it's a little bit of the
7 reverse of that. So it depends on the
8 sector. We can provide you that full
9 breakdown.

10 And I do like to caution, sometimes we
11 do use folks, part-time or adjuncts that have
12 a real value. By the way, I teach; I'm
13 considered an adjunct. But I think it's
14 important to still teach. I taught in the
15 fall. So it's a balance. It depends on the
16 sector, though. It's -- at the
17 University Centers, for instance, it's much
18 higher full-time --

19 (Inaudible overtalk.)

20 SENATOR STAVISKY: You'll get it --
21 thank you.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We've been --
23 in the Assembly now, we've been joined by
24 Assemblywoman Dickens and

1 Assemblywoman Mitaynes.

2 And we go to the Higher Ed ranker,
3 Assemblyman Walczyk for five minutes. Five
4 minutes.

5 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Chancellor, good
6 morning.

7 First, I just want to thank you. You
8 have a reputation as a smart guy, but you
9 also have a reputation as a really hard
10 worker. And I know you and your staff over
11 the last year have been in overdrive, not
12 just in higher education but in a lot of ways
13 helping New York get through this thing.

14 So from the bottom of my heart, and of
15 on behalf of the residents of Northern
16 New York, thank you for all of your efforts.

17 How are the testing sites coming
18 along?

19 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: I think --
20 I am just -- first, I'm honored to be the
21 chancellor of SUNY. Being a graduate, I love
22 this system. And the way we've stepped up
23 has been remarkable. Every one of our
24 campuses are testing every one of the

1 students, faculty and staff because I've
2 required it. But it's important.

3 We have volunteered more than half of
4 our campuses to be vaccine distribution
5 sites, and they're going extraordinarily
6 well. We've had students step up and say,
7 We're going to volunteer on the healthcare
8 side. We had 2500 students in healthcare
9 programs that said, We'll volunteer to help
10 with vaccines or testing. No money, no
11 credit, they just want to give back.

12 We've had this time and time again,
13 and it's been impressive. And I think a
14 system like ours, which is so large -- we
15 have the largest system of public higher
16 education. We're one of the few systems to
17 bring back some of our students to in-person
18 learning. And we've done more than
19 8,000 tests since September, which is more
20 than some states have done since the
21 beginning of the pandemic, and our positivity
22 rate is 0.5 percent.

23 That shows you that our students are
24 doing the right things. They deserve to be

1 applauded for this. They want to be back in
2 learning. It's just amazing to see. We --

3 (Overtalk.)

4 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: You're doing a
5 great job. I appreciate it.

6 Your faculty and staff, how are they
7 handling it? And do you think if there was a
8 retirement incentive you would have a huge
9 drop?

10 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: You know,
11 I'm not exactly sure about that. I think
12 there's been great strain on everyone. I
13 think you see strain all across society,
14 right? This is not specific to SUNY.

15 But our faculty and staff have
16 struggled. Many of our support staffers have
17 been on campuses since the beginning,
18 exposing themselves in ways that we can't
19 even comprehend, in food service and other
20 areas. Our academic staff had to transition
21 really quickly, and I think they've done that
22 well.

23 It's a little like Sisyphus. That
24 rock gets pushed up the hill and then the

1 rock slips back down and we push that rock up
2 the hill -- because that's the choice we
3 have, because we both have a moral obligation
4 and an ethical obligation to supporting our
5 students. And that's what this is all about.

6 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: We appreciate
7 you doing it. You mentioned that enrollees
8 are down this year. I know that was
9 certainly true in talking anecdotally with
10 local students, many of them taking a gap
11 year.

12 Do you expect that that will rebound?
13 And it seems like there's a real focus on the
14 flagship or the research institutions and
15 supporting them with future enrollment. What
16 about, you know, your run-of-the-mill SUNY
17 schools?

18 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: I -- first
19 of all, I think the research institutions
20 have actually done fairly well on enrollment.
21 They've been basically flat or a little bit
22 up, net.

23 Our community colleges have had some
24 difficulties. Most of our enrollment decline

1 has largely come from our community colleges.
2 I think it's about 10 percent year over year,
3 about 9.9 percent. But over the last
4 10 years our enrollment in our community
5 colleges has declined nearly a third.

6 We want to focus our attention there.
7 That's why I focus so much of my attention on
8 community colleges. They provide
9 fundamentally important access programs and
10 the EOC programs that feed into our community
11 colleges.

12 I was just at the Capital City EOC
13 program, the welding program, the cosmetology
14 program, the health services program. We
15 need to support those programs, because those
16 are going to be the access points for so many
17 New Yorkers. As we're transitioning into the
18 modern economy, I think we need to pay more
19 of our attention and care there.

20 And I've spent a lot of time on the
21 community colleges as well as the
22 comprehensives. I think we have a lot of
23 different opportunity points for people. We
24 have to support all of those different

1 sectors because they all play a vitally
2 important role.

3 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Thanks,
4 Chancellor. I appreciate it. And I know we
5 don't have a lot of time here.

6 You know, I can respect you as a
7 Jets fan, I guess, as a lifelong
8 Buffalo Bills fan. But I want to tell you a
9 quick story about hockey in the
10 North Country. So in HECap, New York State
11 invested \$3.45 million in Clarkson, and that
12 turned into a \$25.7 million investment in
13 Shell Arena and Campus Center, which is now,
14 as I understand it, world-renowned ice as far
15 as hockey goes, to skate on. It's an
16 incredible thing.

17 We had a cut of \$30 million in this
18 budget to HECap. So this is -- this is with
19 your platform, and I would just urge the
20 legislative leaders to restore that in our
21 one-house budgets and hopefully negotiate
22 that at the table with the Governor.

23 I also wanted to bring up flexible
24 tuition changes. Your Article VII language

1 will allow schools that have doctoral
2 programs to increase tuition by 1.5 times.
3 What institutions do you anticipate will see
4 that large of an increase in tuition?

5 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: We're
6 not -- we would not want to do that actual
7 increase every year. We would just want the
8 authority to consider that and go through a
9 transparent process. We look at our
10 University Centers, the four University
11 Centers, and our medical institutions
12 especially for those services.

13 It's more about transparency for us.
14 Already the differential exists between many
15 of those University Centers and our other
16 colleges, but they're done, as the chair of
17 the Higher Education Committee in the
18 Assembly said, through fees and other things.
19 That's not aidable. There's lots of problems
20 associated with that. This is a way to
21 rationalize the program across the system.

22 We wouldn't do the 1.5 every year, we
23 would just want the ability to consider that
24 going forward.

1 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: I appreciate the
2 time and conversation. Thank you,
3 Chancellor.

4 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you.

5 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

6 We go to the Senate.

7 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Sorry, guys, I
8 had a little trouble catching the mute.

9 Our next questioner is Senator Phil
10 Boyle, ranker on Higher Ed, five-minute
11 clock.

12 SENATOR BOYLE: Thank you,
13 Madam Chairman. And you forgot to mention
14 lifelong Jets fan.

15 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Three-minute
16 clock. Oh, no, just kidding.

17 (Laughter.)

18 SENATOR BOYLE: Thank you, Chancellor,
19 for being here. Thank you for the great work
20 you're doing, and your staff.

21 Just two quick questions. One
22 pertains to the offshore wind. I know during
23 the Governor's State of the State he
24 mentioned a \$20 million investment in

1 Offshore Wind Training Institute, which would
2 be funded by NYSERDA. My question is, how is
3 that -- where is that money coming from,
4 basically, through NYSERDA, and what's the
5 time frame for operational capability on
6 that? Any ideas?

7 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: We're
8 really excited by that.

9 So there's two sources of funding that
10 I know about. One is NYSERDA funding. One
11 is we have some clean energy money that you
12 appropriated to us that we want to access as
13 well. It's about, I think \$7 million or so,
14 but we want to use a portion of it. It is
15 for SUNY Farmingdale as well as Stony Brook
16 University. Stony Brook University is going
17 to put together much of the curriculum,
18 working with President Nader, who's done a
19 phenomenal job on the green energy side at
20 Farmingdale State College.

21 We would like to have our pieces in
22 place to start training people by this
23 summer. We don't want to wait. I think
24 we've been putting the pieces in place. So

1 by this summer we'd like to start enrolling
2 students; we're thinking in the range of
3 about 500 people to start, but then ramp that
4 up to at least 2500 people.

5 But I think it could be bigger than
6 that. I think the project alone will produce
7 many jobs, including the manufacturing
8 capability that we're building in the State
9 of New York.

10 So that's the two sources, and that's
11 sort of where we are timewise.

12 SENATOR BOYLE: Great. Thank you.
13 Those of us, obviously, on Long Island are
14 very excited about that project.

15 A question about the -- you mentioned
16 about the flagship schools. This is kind of
17 a pet peeve of mine. I've talked to some of
18 your predecessors over the years. I went to
19 Geneseo, and I have a master's from Albany,
20 but I also graduated from the University of
21 North Carolina. And it always killed me that
22 all of our greatest athletes from New York
23 State are going to other -- Kentucky,
24 Florida, North Carolina.

1 I believe if we had some kind of
2 flagship -- not academic flagship but
3 athletic flagship university, we would make
4 millions and millions and millions of dollars
5 in New York State, keep it here just for our
6 purposes. Just a thought.

7 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Well, I'm
8 not going to get into who should be the
9 flagship, because this is where I get myself
10 in trouble.

11 SENATOR BOYLE: I know. I know.

12 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: But I will
13 just note, not -- irrespective of picking it,
14 the UB football team, if you haven't seen
15 them play, you should watch that team play.
16 They could probably beat the Jets by
17 40 points, that's how good they are. The
18 gentleman ran for like 800 yards and eight
19 touchdowns one game for UB. They are a
20 phenomenal team.

21 SENATOR BOYLE: Well, thank you.

22 And my last is a comment -- you can
23 answer if you want to -- regarding a concern
24 of mine, and that involves cancel culture and

1 free speech on our campus. I believe a great
2 threat to the future of our country is when
3 students are protesting, left or right, and
4 not allowing the other side to speak on our
5 campuses.

6 It kills me when, for example, a
7 conservative wants to come speak at a college
8 campus -- and I tell them, when I speak to
9 students, you want to protest across the
10 street? Great. Wave a flag, whatever you
11 want to do, yell at them. But you can't
12 start burning things, breaking windows.

13 And then the head of the college --
14 which has happened at other schools, not too
15 much at SUNY that I've seen -- suddenly
16 cancels the speaker from even coming on
17 campus. That's a bad sign for our future.

18 And I'd like to know if you guys have
19 any plans about doing something about that.

20 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Well, I
21 think in the academy, now more than ever, I
22 think what we're trying to do is engage in a
23 civil discussion. I think what we've lost in
24 this country a little bit is the ability to

1 interact with one another with differences,
2 work those things through. Sometimes you
3 will never agree; sometimes you will agree.

4 I think our students have been leaders
5 on that front at SUNY, quite frankly. We've
6 had protests on both sides. But how do you
7 engage people more in this society, which is
8 highly divided, you feel the cultural divide.
9 I think our students can drive the change
10 there, and I think SUNY has been a good
11 example overall of allowing the free
12 expression of ideas, as long as it doesn't
13 cross the boundaries, as you said, into other
14 activities.

15 I think we should have all voices.
16 That's the point of college. All voices
17 should be heard. You should work these
18 things through, you should think and focus on
19 those issues and then see where you go.

20 SENATOR BOYLE: Thank you, Jim. Thank
21 you, Chairwoman.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go now to --
23 well, let me just announce who -- we've been
24 joined by a few Assemblymembers. Assemblyman

1 Aubry, Assemblywoman Joyner, Assemblywoman
2 Bichotte Hermelyn.

3 And we go to Assemblyman Epstein for
4 three minutes.

5 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you,
6 Madam Chair. And it's good to see you,
7 Chancellor.

8 You know, so many questions I had were
9 already asked. But I don't understand why at
10 this point we would support cuts at all to
11 the SUNY system. We know there's a reduction
12 in enrollment, but the reality is we need to
13 improve our public education. Would you
14 support additional revenue if additional
15 revenue became available?

16 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Absolutely.
17 One million -- one million percent
18 absolutely. If you want to offer, we'll take
19 it.

20 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Yeah, we're
21 looking for money for you. We need to raise
22 revenues to make sure that our public
23 education schools have more revenue.

24 Excelsior. You know, you know, we've

1 heard some real success in Excelsior on the
2 tuition, but we've heard a lot of concerns
3 about people being left out because they've
4 had a grade that has hasn't gone well or, you
5 know, they had to go part-time because of
6 family issues.

7 Would you support expanding Excelsior
8 to include either part-timers or people who
9 had reasonable reasons that they needed
10 support outside of, you know, the existing
11 model that we have today?

12 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: I think
13 certain scholarships have different end
14 goals, and I think the Excelsior scholarship
15 had a completion end goal, which was
16 something I helped write, and a retention end
17 goal. And we've seen the retention rates
18 actually up a little bit in the Excelsior
19 programs. Upwards of three-quarters of the
20 students are maintaining their academic
21 status when it's lower in other areas.

22 I do think you raise a very solid
23 point. Our system and model has changed.
24 People come in later in life. They need to

1 go to college over a longer period of time.
2 Our incentive structure does not actually
3 work around those types of students quite
4 well. Those are the types of students I
5 dealt with at Empire State College, the
6 post-traditional student. I hate the
7 terminology because a student is a student,
8 it doesn't matter when you come to college.

9 I do think we should look at other
10 ways and other avenues financially to allow
11 students who need a longer runway to complete
12 college successfully because of life issues
13 and other things, to have the same type of
14 access.

15 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Great. I
16 appreciate it. I'd love to collaborate with
17 you on that.

18 I know the chair mentioned the
19 withhold on transcripts and the risks that it
20 has. The Housing chairmen mentioned that. I
21 would love to support any follow-up around
22 that.

23 So students with disabilities play a
24 really important role in our student body,

1 they are really active, but we've heard time
2 and time from students with disabilities
3 saying they don't have enough support in
4 schools. Would you support additional
5 resources to go to those students who may
6 need help? And some of them have physical
7 accessibility issues, but a lot of them have
8 other special needs that the schools aren't
9 able to provide.

10 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Two issues.
11 Yes, they need more support. We have tried
12 across the board as -- when I became
13 chancellor, we just created something called
14 the Center for Autism Inclusivity, which is
15 one area. And I --

16 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Chancellor, I've
17 got like 10 seconds. I'd love to talk to you
18 more about that also --

19 (Overtalk.)

20 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Talk to
21 Collin Lacki from Niagara County Community
22 College, a visually impaired student. He's
23 phenomenal on this space. Collin Lacki from
24 Niagara County Community College.

1 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Great. And the
2 last thing is we talked about money for
3 student organizing. Love to follow up with
4 you at a different time about that, resources
5 for student organizing on campuses.

6 Thank you, Chair.

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

8 We go to the Senate.

9 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

10 Senator Peter Harckham for three
11 minutes.

12 SENATOR HARCKHAM: Thank you,
13 Madam Chair.

14 Chancellor, good to see you. Thanks
15 for being here.

16 As chair of the Committee on
17 Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, I'm glad to
18 hear about your enhanced efforts on
19 behavioral health outreach. I want to drill
20 down a little bit on some of those issues.

21 Do any of our campuses have dedicated
22 support residences for students in early
23 recovery?

24 Number two, how much are we spending

1 on substance use disorder services, and what
2 more could you do with additional funding?

3 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Assemblyman
4 {sic} you have been a phenomenal advocate,
5 Assemblyman, in this area, and I don't want
6 to misspeak. Let me get you the actual facts
7 on recovery services for our students. That
8 is something we did a lot of research
9 analysis on at the Rockefeller Institute,
10 because the opioid crisis has really not
11 abated as much as we would have liked it to,
12 especially in our student population. So let
13 me get you more of those facts and then what
14 the specific needs of our colleges would be.

15 But I think there is a -- I think the
16 pandemic has created more challenges for our
17 students, where they are turning to substance
18 misuse, and we want to deal with that. But
19 let me -- we would love to even convene
20 something with you on that, because it's an
21 important thing. But I want to get you the
22 right facts and numbers. I don't have them
23 as a recall right now, so I don't want to
24 misspeak.

1 SENATOR HARCKHAM: Okay, yeah, I'd
2 love to work with you on that.

3 The reason I asked the question is
4 some of the private colleges and universities
5 are now setting up specific dedicated dorms
6 and residences with supportive services for
7 students reentering their academic careers in
8 early recovery.

9 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Yeah, it's
10 a great idea. It's something that we worked
11 on when I was in the government still on the
12 recovery high schools and things like that.
13 I think we need more of those types of
14 supports. Because if you provide the
15 support, the students can be highly
16 successful. We just need to give them that
17 opportunity for recovery.

18 SENATOR HARCKHAM: All right.
19 Terrific. Look forward to working with you
20 on that.

21 And Madam Chair, I yield the rest of
22 my time.

23 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you very
24 much, Senator.

1 Assembly, it's your turn.

2 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes. We've
3 been joined by Assemblyman Salka.

4 And we go to Assemblywoman Sarah
5 Clark, three minutes.

6 ASSEMBLYWOMAN CLARK: Hello. Thank
7 you, Chancellor, so very much for taking time
8 and spending it with us, all about SUNY. It
9 is a huge priority. I am a SUNY Stony Brook
10 graduate and currently serving in the
11 Rochester region in the Assembly.

12 I have two very quick questions. My
13 first has to do -- I wrote a letter with a
14 bunch of my colleagues regarding on-campus
15 staff and faculty. Currently we know
16 professors are part of the 1b eligibility,
17 but not the food workers and other folks who
18 are on campus, whether it's in-person
19 learning.

20 So I just wanted your thought as to
21 whether that would really help to build some
22 equity on campuses, to make sure that where
23 there is in-person instruction, that the
24 entire campus, particularly those who are

1 most around other people, are getting the
2 vaccine as well.

3 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: That we --
4 so we did advocate to include our in-person
5 instructors in the 1b. We've also advocated
6 for our support staff and our administrative
7 and professional staff on campuses. That is
8 something that UUP, President Kowal from UUP,
9 the president of the United University
10 Professions and I have advocated together on.
11 We understand that there is of course
12 limitation of the supply, so we're mindful of
13 that. We're happy that about -- I think
14 about 40 or 50 percent of our folks on campus
15 now qualify, so that's a good thing.

16 And that's why we're also requiring
17 testing every week of all of our faculty,
18 students and staff, because that also allows
19 us to monitor the situation. Right now our
20 staff positivity rate on our campuses is
21 0.32 percent. It's very manageable. But we
22 have been advocating for the inclusion of
23 those folks as well. They are heroes in this
24 pandemic.

1 ASSEMBLYWOMAN CLARK: Great. Thank
2 you. And we'll keep working on that.

3 My second piece is in some
4 conversations that we've had with our
5 community college here -- MCC is just a gem
6 for us, both regionally and nationally as a
7 model for community colleges. When the CARES
8 funding was passed and money went to support
9 student services, they have expressed that
10 the support they were able to give students
11 who were struggling made such a difference in
12 terms of them coming back this fall.

13 So now that there's another round of
14 federal money passed, one of the things we
15 talk about a lot is you guys -- if the SUNY
16 system can't spend that again on the student
17 services because it's being held back until
18 we figure out the budget, that could be
19 harmful. So I would just love to hear your
20 thoughts about how important it was to
21 support students in need during COVID and how
22 much that allowed them to come back in the
23 fall and enroll again. And if we aren't
24 allowed to let SUNY use this next round of

1 federal funding to do it, instead, the
2 horrible idea of offsetting budget cuts
3 instead with the federal dollars.

4 So I just wanted to hear what you
5 thought about how important that money was to
6 helping students who were struggling and
7 staying on campus and staying enrolled.

8 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you.
9 It's absolutely essential. It has been a
10 life-changing experience for students to have
11 access to that.

12 And thankfully the Governor in the
13 Executive Budget did not offset our costs.
14 They have allowed us to spend that money on
15 student services, which was really key for
16 us. So we're hopeful in future stimulus
17 discussions that we would have the same
18 access.

19 ASSEMBLYWOMAN CLARK: I did hear that
20 this round they are being asked not to spend
21 it quite yet. Is that true?

22 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Not that I
23 have heard of. We've put out, I think, about
24 \$220 million or so on student services, and

1 will continue to do so.

2 ASSEMBLYWOMAN CLARK: Perfect.

3 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to the
4 Senate now.

5 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

6 Our next questioner is the ranker
7 {sic} on education, Shelley Mayer,
8 five-minute clock.

9 SENATOR O'MARA: The chair.

10 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Shelley?

11 SENATOR MAYER: Can't open my video,
12 but --

13 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay. We can
14 hear you.

15 SENATOR MAYER: Okay, very good.

16 Hello, Chancellor. Nice to see you.
17 Congratulations.

18 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you.

19 SENATOR MAYER: The first is, as you
20 may know, I have a bill that I sponsored
21 early into COVID that creates additional
22 revenue targeted at K-12, and 15 percent for
23 SUNY and CUNY. I wonder whether as -- I
24 don't think you were chancellor at the time.

1 Now, as chancellor, would you support an
2 additional tax on high-income earners with
3 the money to go to K-12 and SUNY and CUNY?

4 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Well, thank
5 you, Chair, for that question. I don't opine
6 on how you raise revenue. We would always --
7 as I said to other members of the committees,
8 we would always welcome more revenue. But I
9 don't feel it's my place to opine on how you
10 do that piece.

11 SENATOR MAYER: Okay --

12 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: But we
13 won't look away if you give it us to us.

14 SENATOR MAYER: Well, we would love
15 your more active support than that passive
16 statement, but I understand that.

17 Okay, second thing is on the issue of
18 these -- lowering the cost of certificate
19 programs that are deemed in high demand. Are
20 you doing a regional analysis? My question
21 is, for example, for -- what's a certificate
22 in high demand? In WCC, for me, it might be
23 different than in upstate community colleges'
24 regional demand. And how connected are you

1 to the employers in determining which
2 certificate programs are deemed in high
3 demand?

4 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you
5 for that question. This is a really
6 important thing for us.

7 We have begun working with employers.
8 We just recently had a conversation with the
9 Business Council, we're working with MACNY,
10 for instance, and other employers. What
11 we're running into are the Courseras of the
12 world, who come in and can underwrite
13 certificate processes because they have a
14 different business -- for-profit business
15 model, which then undercuts our community
16 colleges in other sectors, which provide
17 higher-quality certifications.

18 So what we're asking for is
19 flexibility, because we can deal with the
20 volume. And volume helps us, right? Even if
21 you lower the cost a little bit. Right now
22 we're locked into certain cost structures in
23 the state. This is one area where we want to
24 reduce the cost of our certifications because

1 we're actually losing out to some for-profit
2 models where we don't think they're as high
3 quality.

4 We would do it as a regional thing,
5 because I do think every region has a
6 different cost structure. And we would want
7 to link it with the high-demand job areas
8 that are needed, not just willy-nilly.

9 And our community colleges, to their
10 credit, have done a pretty remarkable job on
11 this front. You mentioned Westchester
12 Community College. They have done a really
13 good job on that. I've heard about Monroe;
14 Monroe is like a star when it comes to
15 workforce development, and other of our
16 community colleges. So that's what we're
17 looking for on that front.

18 SENATOR MAYER: I appreciate that. I
19 think there is a real competitive
20 disadvantage to the community colleges now.
21 With the for-profit sector getting ahead, I
22 think we have make-up to do.

23 The other is, what is the
24 institutional relationship between SUNY and

1 the community colleges and the public high
2 schools? Is there -- have you made a
3 concerted effort to build relationships and
4 ensure there's communications?

5 I'm thinking of again, in our
6 experience, WCC being the school of first
7 choice for so many graduates of high schools,
8 and yet the relationships are not always
9 strong enough.

10 Have you built any kind of structure
11 to enhance that?

12 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: We have to
13 do more there, frankly. I think there's
14 always an ability to break down barriers
15 between different institutions. Because our
16 students, by the way, don't get the
17 difference between their high school and then
18 community college or a four-year school.
19 Right? It's artifices that we create, not
20 that they understand.

21 We do have board members who have been
22 really helpful. Trustee Stan Litow, who has
23 done a lot of work on the P-TECH and early
24 college high school front, I think has helped

1 break down those things. Our provost office
2 has been really focused on that.

3 But we want to build more of those
4 relationships, so however we can partner, we
5 absolutely will.

6 SENATOR MAYER: You may have answered
7 this earlier on the proposed increase in
8 tuition for some of the schools. Have you
9 given any consideration of the fact that for
10 most of our communities that have been
11 disproportionately hit by the economic impact
12 of COVID, this could result in decreased
13 enrollment?

14 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: I'm trying
15 to rationalize and make more transparent the
16 process, Chair.

17 The issue really is if you take one of
18 our University Centers now, the overall cost
19 is about \$28,000, \$29,000 -- compared to one
20 of our four-year traditional comprehensive
21 colleges, which is in the realm of 22,000 or
22 23,000. The issue is it's not -- a lot of
23 those differential dollars aren't aidable in
24 any case.

1 But we want to try to rationalize the
2 system while giving our University Centers
3 the ability to invest in research. If we
4 want to build research juggernauts, they do
5 need additional investment.

6 We have created a pretty good cost
7 price even for our University Centers, but
8 this is part of our transparency piece of
9 reducing some of those other fees and
10 associated things in a more transparent way.

11 SENATOR MAYER: Thank you. Thank you
12 very much.

13 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.
14 Assembly.

15 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes, we go to
16 Assemblyman Smullen, three minutes.

17 ASSEMBLYMAN SMULLEN: Thank you very
18 much.

19 Can you hear me?

20 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Three
21 minutes --

22 ASSEMBLYMAN SMULLEN: Jim, it's good
23 to see you. It's been a long time since my
24 Executive Chamber days.

1 I've got five questions for you. I'll
2 read them all so they're on the record, and
3 appreciate your response either here or your
4 staff replying in writing.

5 I'll get going here. So the first
6 question is, regarding SNAP enrollment, did
7 you seek a federal waiver to substitute
8 school enrollment for work, or do you need us
9 to legislate that authority for you?

10 The second question is, can our
11 economically countercyclical community
12 colleges be supported on 10-year per capita
13 enrollment formula, which would help their
14 year-to-year budget issues?

15 Third question, SUNY medical personnel
16 are highly credentialed, they're outstanding,
17 and they receive some of the highest public
18 salaries in New York. Can the actual sources
19 of their compensation be broken down by
20 funding source?

21 Fourth question, what's the status of
22 the conversation on renaming SUNY the, quote,
23 University of New York at Such-and-such, to
24 better brand the system?

1 And then the fifth question is, do you
2 consider private colleges in New York State
3 to be competitors in the education
4 marketplace in New York State?

5 So if we could roll back up to SNAP
6 enrollment, what are the requirements that
7 the feds have for that program?

8 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: I will try
9 my best to answer all of these. If not, we
10 will have a follow-up conversation with you.

11 The SNAP was a waiver that was
12 approved. The Governor and the Office of
13 Temporary and Disability Assistance got that
14 approval, which allows us now to substitute
15 that work requirement, which is a
16 game-changer.

17 On the community college, we could
18 spend probably 25 hours on community college
19 funding formulas itself. We would like to
20 have that discussion about how do we come up
21 with a stronger model for our community
22 colleges.

23 ASSEMBLYMAN SMULLEN: I really
24 would -- I really would, because I have

1 community colleges in my district and they're
2 very important to workforce development, a
3 host of issues. So thank you on that.

4 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS:

5 Compensation, yes, we've been try -- we've
6 been more transparent, at least as I've been
7 chancellor, on compensation. In fact, just
8 so you all know, we understand the economic
9 challenges. I've required our senior staff
10 here to take reductions. We've had new staff
11 come in at significantly reduced cost as
12 well, because we know that's important.

13 University of New York, we're always
14 looking for new ways of branding the system.
15 I have not had a discussion about the
16 University of New York, but I do think we
17 have to move sometimes beyond the
18 location-based name to what the college is
19 known for, because I think that has more
20 cachet and value.

21 And then on the last piece -- I
22 forgot. You had one more piece.

23 ASSEMBLYMAN SMULLEN: Private colleges
24 and SUNY. How do you work the relationship

1 here within our state between, you know,
2 publicly supported public benefit
3 institutions and other institutions of
4 private learning that are also in the same
5 space?

6 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: We have
7 great collaboration often among our private
8 institutions and our public institutions.

9 I'm a public guy. I've always been a
10 public guy. I'm a SUNY guy. I'm always
11 going to advocate for more SUNY, because I
12 think we're the best, so I always want to put
13 us front and center. But I do think there's
14 often an important relationship between our
15 private institutions and our SUNY schools.
16 They're often collaborating on all sorts of
17 things that improve the academic experience
18 for all New Yorkers.

19 ASSEMBLYMAN SMULLEN: Thank you very
20 much for your time today. I appreciate it
21 very much. Thank you.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

23 We go back to the Senate.

24 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you. Our

1 Finance ranker, Tom O'Mara, for five minutes.

2 SENATOR O'MARA: Thank you,
3 Chairwoman. And thank you, Chancellor, for
4 your time this morning in answering our
5 questions. Appreciate it.

6 In the budget a lot of capital
7 projects with matching funds involved are
8 being put on hold. And I certainly
9 understand that in light of the fiscal issues
10 we have.

11 What is your sense of when we'll be
12 moving forward on these projects that are
13 going to be put on hold in this coming fiscal
14 year?

15 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you,
16 Senator.

17 With respect to the private match one,
18 that sector, I know that's something that was
19 adopted in the budget a year or two ago. We
20 do have a couple of projects that are
21 potentially in the pipeline. I do think we
22 can move forward with those as we're moving
23 out of the pandemic issue, hopefully into
24 next year. I will give you a better briefing

1 when we have a better sense of when those can
2 move forward. But there are a couple in the
3 pipeline that could potentially move forward
4 right now.

5 SENATOR O'MARA: Can you highlight
6 what those are at this point?

7 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Well, I
8 don't want to blow the deals for the
9 respective colleges, because then they'll get
10 mad at me, because then the private folks
11 will pull out.

12 But I will be happy, as it becomes
13 more soup, to bring that to the Legislature
14 and brief you fully on where those are.

15 SENATOR O'MARA: Okay. What is the
16 state doing and SUNY doing in relation to aid
17 for non-credit programs, whether they're
18 certificate programs, non-degree programs for
19 local workforce development, which we've
20 certainly seen great efforts at our community
21 colleges in recent years. Are we looking at
22 receiving any federal funding or seeking any
23 of that for these types of programs?

24 You know, I know a lot of the aid

1 through the SUNY system is kind of
2 degree-centric, focused on degrees being
3 issued, as opposed to certificates and those
4 types of workforce development programs. So
5 what is the stress that you're putting on --
6 or the highlights on those types of programs
7 for our local workforce developments?

8 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: We have
9 been advocating for some incentive-type
10 program or scholarship. I know the Governor,
11 in his State of the State, has put forth some
12 ideas on scholarship for that type of
13 workforce certification area. We would like
14 federal dollars invested in that.

15 President Duffy, who is the president
16 of the Adirondack Community College, who
17 serves as sort of the unofficial chair of all
18 of our community colleges, has been a leader
19 in this space, and will continue. That's one
20 area.

21 The second area, in talking to
22 Chairman Mayer, is lowering the cost of some
23 of -- giving us flexibility to lower some of
24 the costs of our certification high-demand

1 programs, which helps us enroll more people.

2 We're kind of locked into costs.

3 The third piece is sometimes we are
4 doing it for free. Our new SUNY Online
5 Workforce Training Center provides those
6 certifications for underemployed and
7 unemployed New Yorkers for free. You give us
8 significant investment, we want to get them
9 involved, we want to get them either matched
10 to a job -- our self-interest is sometimes
11 they'll move on to our community college
12 after the certification, or a four-year
13 school, because they're now interested in
14 additional educational opportunities.

15 So we're willing to do some of that to
16 meet the traditional workforce -- the
17 immediate workforce demands and provide --
18 and demystify what education is to so many
19 people who just feel like they can't have
20 access in a way that is affordable.

21 So we're working on those three
22 planes. But we would, we should look at the
23 structures of how we underwrite tuition
24 support or financial support for some of

1 Senator, which is where you kind of came in,
2 where I think the strength of the community
3 colleges are. The non-credentialing piece,
4 the micro-credentialing is one of those areas
5 that we're trying to get federal support.
6 The stacking of credentials over time I think
7 is really important. That's a sort of shift
8 in how we approach education. Right? That's
9 a longer process, not necessarily a degree
10 process.

11 We've pushed on the part-time --
12 expansion of financial support for part-time
13 students, as well as expanded Pell
14 eligibility, which I think will help improve
15 our community college enrollment, which will
16 increase their funding. I do think we need,
17 as some of the other members have called for,
18 a longer discussion about how we fund
19 community colleges, what the right
20 methodology is.

21 We haven't quite figured it out over
22 all this time, Senator. Chargebacks and
23 other things, I think we have to have that
24 discussion, because you are seeing many

1 inequities within the system right now
2 because of it.

3 SENATOR O'MARA: Chancellor, my time
4 is up. Thank you for your responsiveness.

5 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you.

6 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.
7 Assembly.

8 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes, we go to
9 Assemblywoman Buttenschon for three minutes.

10 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BUTTENSCHON: Good
11 morning, Chancellor. It's great to see you
12 again, as I appreciate meeting you at SUNY
13 Poly as you were touring the state, and I
14 appreciate you recognizing the needed funding
15 and staff and research there as they have so
16 many innovative and great programs.

17 Thank you again for all you're doing
18 to support the challenges to keep faculty and
19 students safe. And now I know you're working
20 diligently on the staff.

21 I am a community college graduate, a
22 graduate of the SUNY system as well as a
23 Middle State reviewer. I want to reconfirm
24 the importance of community colleges and the

1 role they can play in the recovery of this
2 devastating pandemic, as well as the need, as
3 so many have talked about, for a new funding
4 formula as we work with our non-credit
5 programs, the micro-credentialing that you
6 discussed.

7 My questions are, can you advise me if
8 you're working on formal plans with community
9 colleges and SUNY institutions for the state
10 recovery plan, as I know you have a key role
11 in it.

12 Also, you address the concerns of the
13 slow approval process for the much-needed
14 academic certificate programs and
15 certificates. This is a concern that I hear
16 quite frequently. And do you have a plan
17 that you could put forward so that we could
18 expedite it during this recovery time?

19 And finally, do all your capital
20 projects include a green component and, more
21 importantly, antimicrobial high-touch surface
22 areas? So thank you.

23 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: So thank
24 you. It was great to visit SUNY Poly and

1 those labs; those students are phenomenal.

2 The antimicrobial surface area is
3 actually being developed by SUNY Binghamton
4 researchers right now, with students, so
5 hopefully we can solve our own problems on
6 that.

7 On the green --

8 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BUTTENSCHON: Well, I
9 was going to -- let me just interrupt. I
10 want to link you with Rome, we have a
11 business here. So that would be great.
12 Thank you.

13 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: On the
14 capital, we're doing more on the green side.
15 We don't have an actual hard rule on making
16 sure our capital projects are all green, but
17 we are moving in that direction. Our stats
18 are pretty good on that.

19 We have been focused more on if we're
20 building new structures or retrofitting new
21 structures, do you focus on geothermal, do
22 you bring in some of those core activities.

23 I want to add a student component to
24 that, which I still think is missing from us,

1 how do we turn our students into the
2 workforce for ourselves, in a way, that --
3 when we do all of those things.

4 And on the workforce, the community
5 colleges have to be a major part of this.
6 That's why I've been visiting so many of our
7 community colleges. I think I've already
8 visited 20 out of our 30 community colleges
9 thus far. They're going to play a
10 fundamentally important role in the recovery
11 of the State of New York. I think they
12 provide the different access tools --
13 micro-credentialing, associate's degrees,
14 certifications. I think the online training
15 program feeding into the community college
16 system will help.

17 And there are 5 million New Yorkers
18 right now between the ages of 24 and 60 with
19 no college education. Many of those
20 individuals are being transitioned out of
21 traditional industries, and they need more
22 education now more than ever. So it's our
23 job to connect them with all the various
24 resources that we have. And that's what

1 we're going to work on too, is just reaching
2 out and getting those folks to know that we
3 even exist. I think that's part of our SUNY
4 For All campaign as well.

5 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BUTTENSCHON: And I
6 appreciate that. I would like to see formal
7 plans. Thank you.

8 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you. We
9 go to the Senate now.

10 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you very
11 much.

12 Senator Robert Jackson, for three
13 minutes.

14 SENATOR JACKSON: So good morning,
15 everyone. And Chancellor, good morning.
16 Good to see you. I am and my daughters are
17 SUNY alums -- SUNY New Paltz, myself and my
18 oldest daughter, and University of Buffalo.
19 So I have a vested interest in SUNY and CUNY
20 and education overall.

21 Let me thank you for your leadership.
22 I just have several questions to ask, if you
23 don't mind. And I have only three minutes,
24 and so I'm just trying to be as quick as I

1 can, and I would appreciate it if you can
2 answer them as succinctly as possible.

3 So can you tell me about -- first, I
4 disagree with the \$200 increase in tuition.
5 People are suffering right now, not only in
6 New York but around the entire state. And
7 this is not the time to increase tuition.
8 And I understand that you need money overall,
9 and we're trying to raise the money, as
10 Harvey Epstein said, through taxes and what
11 have you and so forth, in order -- I heard
12 you say that you wish you had -- a million
13 times you would agree for an increase in
14 money for SUNY, and I appreciate that. But
15 it has to come from somewhere.

16 So how do you plan on implementing a
17 proposed cut of \$46 million? That's one
18 question. And then the second question is,
19 do you and SUNY plan on compensating
20 hazardous pay for workers in SUNY hospitals
21 that put their lives on the line during this
22 pandemic?

23 So those are the two questions that I
24 have for you.

1 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Well, thank
2 you, Senator.

3 Just -- and I want to, just for
4 clarity -- we -- we understood the economic
5 challenges that folks had, so we did not
6 authorize a tuition increase this year. This
7 is the first time, that it was important in
8 my chancellorship not to increase tuition,
9 which we did not do. And the board was very
10 supportive of that, because we felt the
11 struggles of our students.

12 On the second piece -- last piece
13 first -- we would like to do more for our
14 healthcare workers. They are frontline
15 heroes. We have some limitations by state
16 collective bargaining. We've asked for some
17 flexibility to provide additional resources
18 to those. But we've been working with folks
19 from PEF and CSEA and UUP to try to get some
20 more funding to them.

21 We're working on alternative
22 arrangements to help those individuals --
23 parking or other things. We can never fully
24 repay those folks, but we're trying to at

1 least do a small down payment to say we
2 appreciate everything that you do. And by
3 the way, they're getting poached to private
4 hospitals that can actually pay them a lot
5 more, so we want to maintain our ability to
6 keep our workforce whole.

7 And on the reduction of \$46 million,
8 we're going to focus on protecting core
9 academic services, protecting our faculty and
10 our staff to make sure they can educate
11 students, and protecting those core student
12 services. And where we have to take
13 reductions, we're going to focus everywhere
14 else but there, as we can, because that's the
15 most important thing for me. Even if I have
16 to, you know, work in your office and give up
17 and sell my building, we'll do all of those
18 things.

19 SENATOR JACKSON: I like that, I like
20 that attitude. I appreciate that. And as a
21 former PEF employee -- I worked for the union
22 for 23 years -- I will be advocating. So
23 I'll be interested in seeing what that game
24 plan is in order to support it.

1 And I thank you for your time.

2 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you.

3 SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you,

4 Madam Chairs.

5 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

6 Assembly.

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to

8 Assemblyman Conrad.

9 ASSEMBLYMAN CONRAD: Thank you. Thank
10 you, Chairs. Thank you, Chancellor.

11 I'm coming from Buffalo, so I'll take
12 the Jets on the chin here.

13 I just want to point out one thing
14 really quickly before I get to my question.
15 Going back to UB, UB was in the top 25 for
16 football in the ranking. They made the NCAA
17 video games. Very proud here in Buffalo of
18 the UB experience, so talking about flagship
19 sports, it's one of the best D1 schools
20 around here, personally.

21 I want to talk a little bit about
22 student retention and these invisible
23 barriers. I know that ideas42 out of Harvard
24 had done a program at Brockport State, as

1 they were kind of looking at low-cost nudges
2 to keep kids to be able to complete. Is
3 that something that we're carrying forward in
4 other schools right now, Chancellor, the
5 ideas42 retention program?

6 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: I don't
7 know specifically to that program, but we
8 have a couple of programs like SUNY Re-Enroll
9 and other things to get folks to re-enroll.
10 And I think some of the things that we've
11 been doing under SUNY For All is to try to
12 get some folks who have some college but no
13 degree back into our universe, especially the
14 older demographic, which is the growing --
15 the growing -- the growth in higher education
16 right now is that demographic of 25 to 44,
17 actually.

18 So we have many programs. We want to
19 unify some of that, because too often what
20 you find in these programs, we have these
21 one-offs, we can't actually leverage all the
22 value. So that's something that we're now,
23 as we're turning the page on COVID, focusing
24 a lot of our time and energy on, in fact.

1 ASSEMBLYMAN CONRAD: Okay. Because I
2 find that these small little behavioral, you
3 know, economical nudges -- you know, you've
4 got to file your paperwork, you've got to do
5 this -- you know, for somebody who's a
6 first-time student or maybe the first time in
7 their family going to college, you know, now
8 having that kind of guidance is really
9 helpful and having those little nudges along.

10 I know a lot of students right now are
11 not really keen on -- I've had some friends
12 whose kids go to UB who are kind of not going
13 to carry on this semester, they're going to
14 take one off until the COVID's over. But,
15 you know, being able to get them back on and
16 keeping in touch with them is going to be so
17 important to I think the -- keeping SUNY
18 going.

19 You know, I'm a proud graduate of SUNY
20 Fredonia, SUNY Buff State. I think you have
21 a phenomenal program, it's world-renowned,
22 and I just want to keep it tiptop if we can.

23 So thank you.

24 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Well, even

1 the -- just one final point on that is even
2 the SNAP program, when only a quarter of our
3 students really are participating in a
4 program that they're eligible for -- let's
5 just help them. We'll enroll them for it so
6 they're not -- they're worried about their
7 academic studies, not about hunger.

8 And that's just a small part of what
9 our schools can do for folks, and I think
10 that's a game-changer. Because the margins
11 are so small for some of our students -- \$10
12 matters if they eat that day or they're able
13 to buy a book. And we don't want to have
14 that sort of issue for them. So we have to
15 do more.

16 But programs like we've just recently
17 announced are really important steps for us,
18 and we do it for them. Let them focus on
19 their studies, let us focus on the
20 bureaucratic paperwork.

21 ASSEMBLYMAN CONRAD: Appreciate it.
22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: I think -- okay,
24 you're going to hand it to me, right, Helene?

1 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes.

2 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay. Thank you
3 very much. I am next up for the Senate,
4 thank you.

5 So yes, Chancellor, you and I talked
6 about SNAP maybe less than a week ago, and I
7 was so pleased to see the announcement I
8 think yesterday that you've already figured
9 out a way to auto-sign up 10,000 of your
10 students. So I applaud you and the
11 university for being so proactive, because
12 it's totally a win/win. I mean, you've
13 focused on the importance of the food and
14 nutrition for your students.

15 I'll just point out also, SNAP is
16 100 percent federally paid for. That's
17 100 percent new federal dollars into our
18 local economy, our food stores, our farmers.
19 It's a win/win/win from an economic
20 development and health and nutrition and
21 education perspective. Because you have
22 researchers at your university who will
23 explain to you that hungry students can't
24 learn as well. So when we address the food

1 needs of our students, we've addressed a
2 major issue for them educationally as well.
3 So thank you, keep going with that.

4 So money. Last year -- I'm just
5 reading my notes -- SUNY's four-year campuses
6 received 300 million for institutional aid
7 and 186 million for student aid from the
8 federal government. Was that all
9 specifically COVID-related funding, or was
10 some of that normal, everyday money for you
11 all?

12 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: I believe
13 most of it is all -- but I'm going to be
14 corrected if I'm wrong. I think most of it
15 was COVID-related. So the student-based aid,
16 and then what we were paying for -- what we
17 asked for, Senator, on the institutional aid
18 was to expand the categories of what is
19 COVID-related, testing and other things, to
20 help us pay for some of those costs. It was
21 all COVID-related.

22 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: And did you spend
23 it all?

24 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: I believe

1 we have spent most of it. I can get you the
2 breakdown of the final spend-out by campus, I
3 can get you the total dollars allocated by
4 campus.

5 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: And my
6 understanding is the new CARES Act actually
7 allocates even a greater amount to colleges.
8 Do you know how much you're expecting from
9 the CARES funding?

10 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: I think
11 we've netted out about -- it's about
12 \$340 million or so. But I will get you that
13 breakdown.

14 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: To be received in
15 the future.

16 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Yes.

17 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay. And you
18 expect that you will be spending that all
19 down related specifically to COVID activities
20 on the campuses?

21 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: I mean,
22 yeah, there have been real significant costs.
23 I know folks have done improvements to HVAC
24 systems. Testing is a real cost to our

1 campuses. How you provide food services and
2 isolation services has been a real cost to
3 our campuses. Direct student support has
4 been a real -- I mean, our students have real
5 costs on laptops and e-technology and those
6 types of activities.

7 So yeah, I think there's a real need
8 that will be filled by those -- that funding.

9 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: So when the
10 Governor proposes a \$49 million cut to SUNY,
11 you wouldn't respond, Well, we can absorb
12 that because we got all that federal money?
13 Or would you say, We can handle that because
14 we got all that federal money?

15 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Well, I
16 never look a gift horse in the mouth. So
17 if -- we will always take more funding.

18 I do think the federal aid has helped
19 tremendously for our campuses for this year.
20 If we do take a reduction in our spending, we
21 will -- as I mentioned to Senator Jackson --
22 focus on those non-core academic activities
23 in order to protect the student experience as
24 much as possible for sure.

1 But we never are looking for less
2 money, we're always looking for additional
3 services for our college campuses. But I
4 think if we had to manage a \$46 million
5 reduction this year, we could manage it the
6 best we could.

7 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: So you talked
8 quite a bit about sort of SUNY doing all
9 kinds of work with the private sector and the
10 value of doing that and targeting programs to
11 the kinds of things that the labor market is
12 asking for. You know, if they're looking for
13 people who can do A, B and C, it totally
14 makes sense that we should help provide an
15 educated workforce that's got the skills that
16 they're asking for.

17 You were even asked about -- or
18 someone else brought up, excuse me, but you
19 nodded recognition for we're creating new
20 inventions, so to speak, in our labs with our
21 students that have real-world important
22 purposes that private companies are then
23 interested in. I know several of the
24 colleges -- I don't know the community

1 colleges, but several of the colleges have
2 sort of deals with various businesses to use
3 students in the research labs, use SUNY
4 buildings for the actual research they're
5 doing.

6 So here's my question. When the
7 private sector goes ahead and creates
8 something and brings it to market and patents
9 it and makes a lot of money, people who buy
10 stock in that company might get a return on
11 their investment. Do we get a return on our
12 investment in some kind of contractual way so
13 that if somebody invents the next great
14 sustainable battery storage for energy on a
15 SUNY campus -- I just made that one up, by
16 the way, although it would be really good to
17 do that -- do we get a -- sort of a share of
18 the stock value of that company who will do
19 extremely well for a very long time? Do we
20 have those kinds of contracts in place?
21 Because I know private universities do.

22 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Yes, the
23 short -- I don't know about every case on
24 every campus, but many of the programs that

1 we still support, like the START-UP NY
2 program -- which by the way, helped feed the
3 COVID-19 test at SUNY Upstate. Their
4 partner, Quadrant Bioscience, is a
5 START-UP NY company that helped develop the
6 test with Upstate.

7 We do have an equity share in whatever
8 happens with that company, and we're hopeful
9 that that would become fruitful, because that
10 would ultimately help the entire university
11 system, right? This is also not just
12 supporting research and innovation, but how
13 do you give back to liberal arts and other
14 really important programs that are making
15 sure students are well-rounded students.

16 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Exactly. So do
17 you -- obviously, not off the top of your
18 head, but do you think you could provide us a
19 master list of all of these contracts that
20 actually have been fruitful and are paying
21 money back to the university?

22 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: That will
23 be a -- that is a question I do not know off
24 the top of my head. But I will talk to our

1 folks and get you whatever we have, for sure.

2 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay. I'd
3 appreciate that.

4 And I cede back my time to the
5 Assembly, the remainder of my time.

6 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

7 So our next up is Jo Anne Simon for
8 three minutes.

9 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: Thank you very
10 much. Thank you, Chancellor, it's great to
11 see you, and congratulations.

12 I have a couple of questions I'll just
13 outline and then embellish.

14 One, I just want to piggyback on
15 Assemblymember Epstein and resources for
16 students with disabilities on our college
17 campuses. We've talked about community
18 colleges, which of course are -- about
19 75 percent of our students with disabilities
20 enter into higher education through the
21 community college system. And so this is
22 critical.

23 But pound for pound, we really haven't
24 had much of an increase in the dollars

1 serving students with disabilities for about
2 30 years. So I'm just leaving it at that.

3 The other thing is I'd like to talk to
4 you about remote learning and how that's
5 affecting our students, and the difference in
6 learning that remote learning requires, and
7 then the other issue is the teaching of
8 reading that I want to explore.

9 So one is I know that there's tech
10 issues, broadband issues, it's a statewide
11 issue. We've heard from students that they
12 have difficulty with connectivity. But also
13 the means by which they're learning remotely,
14 which for example doesn't allow them to
15 highlight and margin-note like -- if you'd
16 ask me to do something without making
17 highlights or writing in the margin, I
18 wouldn't be able to do it. We're
19 increasingly calling on our students to do
20 that, which puts a greater load on working
21 memory, the speed of reading, et cetera, et
22 cetera.

23 I'm curious whether we're doing any
24 work to explore those issues so that we can

1 then improve those online products by which
2 our students are being forced to learn.

3 And the other is the teaching of
4 reading, and I know we've talked about this
5 before, and I want to follow up with you on
6 it, because it's too much for this hearing.

7 But the National Center on Teacher
8 Quality has pointed out the schools that are
9 doing a good job, according to the science of
10 reading, in teaching young children to read,
11 right -- so it's early reading. And of the
12 As and Bs, only four New York SUNY schools
13 are in that category. So, you know, the rest
14 are unfortunately in the C, D and F category
15 or our SUNY schools.

16 And so I would like to -- I'm working
17 on a roundtable about what we need to do to
18 move the state forward and who are those
19 players. And I'd like to know who to reach
20 out to in your -- at SUNY to start that ball
21 rolling.

22 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Certainly.
23 We'll follow up on that piece.

24 I think -- in the short term, I think

1 remote learning is something we have to learn
2 from this experience. I think our campuses
3 came together extraordinarily well in March.
4 I was a college president at the time; I was
5 at the online college, in many ways, but it
6 was difficult.

7 But I think we kept up in a big way.
8 Students that didn't have access, we created
9 WiFi ports for folks. We tried to do the
10 best we can.

11 I do think there's a moment to learn
12 from this. I do think this hybrid concept of
13 giving more opportunities for students who
14 want to reach a -- as a student at Fredonia,
15 I want to take a course maybe at University
16 at Buffalo? That's an important thing to
17 keep exploring. I had to adapt my
18 teaching -- by the way, I taught in the fall,
19 but I taught remotely for the first time in
20 the history of my teaching career. It's a
21 difficult thing to do right away.

22 But there were benefits. There was a
23 more engaged student body, because we're all
24 on camera looking at each other. But how do

1 you take the best of that? But also how do
2 you make sure the in-person experience is
3 still the most robust experience? Because
4 that's where most of our students want to be.
5 And how do you supplement it with the online
6 piece? I think there's a lot to learn there.
7 We want to take the best of that and apply
8 it.

9 And then for those other pieces,
10 there's a lot of work to do. That's probably
11 its own hearing, which we should probably
12 have, because what we want to do is high
13 quality, not just access. There's a lot of
14 online colleges out there right now. And
15 quite frankly, as the SUNY chancellor, I
16 don't think they're very good. And I don't
17 think they give the same quality to our
18 students. And I think they take a lot of
19 their money, and students get turned off by
20 that experience and then they never go back
21 again.

22 I think we have to flip the equation
23 into high-quality hybrid in a meaningful way,
24 not just an access type of way.

1 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: Thank you.

2 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

3 There are no other Senators for the
4 first round, so we're going to go through the
5 Assembly for a bit. Is that correct, Senator
6 Krueger? Okay.

7 So we go to Assemblywoman Hyndman,
8 three minutes. Alicia, just unmute yourself
9 and you're ready to go.

10 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: Chair
11 Weinstein, I put my hand down. Thank you.

12 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Oh. Okay,
13 grateful.

14 So we go now to our ranker,
15 Assemblyman Ra, for five minutes.

16 THE MODERATOR: I don't actually see
17 him in the hearing at the moment.

18 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: I'm here.

19 THE MODERATOR: Oh, I'm so sorry,
20 Assemblyman.

21 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: All right, it
22 wouldn't -- it wasn't letting me
23 (inaudible) -- but I'm here. Thank you.

24 Chancellor, thank you. I just had a

1 couple of questions, one of which is a little
2 bit of a follow-up to something that was
3 asked earlier.

4 Chair Glick had mentioned the TAP gap.
5 And I know that there is also now somewhat of
6 a gap between the Excelsior Award and the --
7 you know, because it's set at a tuition level
8 from a couple of years ago. Do you know what
9 that number is? Or would that have been
10 included in that \$69 million number?

11 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Let me -- I
12 will have to get back to you on that actual
13 number, Assemblyman. I'm not exactly sure.
14 It may be a couple of million dollars a year,
15 but I want to get the exact number to you so
16 I don't misspeak. I will get that to the
17 committee.

18 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Okay. Thank you very
19 much.

20 The other question I had is I know
21 that, you know, there was a new contract a
22 few years ago with UUP with multiyear
23 increases. I'm just wondering what the
24 potential impact is if there is a cut in

1 operating aid to the institutions, you know,
2 where that might be made up, if it will just
3 fall on the individual institutions or could
4 it be passed along, you know, in fees and
5 things for students.

6 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Do you mean
7 where the increase -- if the increases on the
8 contract actually go into effect right now?
9 It's been paused. It's a \$40 million impact
10 a year to us. When you compound that, right,
11 you go into the outyears, it gets more
12 expensive. We would have to figure out a way
13 to pay for those contracts. The campuses
14 would have to absorb those increases.

15 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Okay. Great.

16 And then the last thing I had, I know
17 that there is a -- you know, an elimination
18 in the budget proposal for the SUNY mental
19 health telecounseling initiative. And
20 obviously this is something that we're trying
21 to utilize in a lot of ways right now, given
22 the pandemic. So I'm just wondering if
23 there's some way, you know, to either
24 otherwise fund that or what the impact would

1 be if that cut were to remain in the enacted
2 budget.

3 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you
4 for that question.

5 We think the money is well spent
6 there. I think it's about a million dollars
7 that was reduced. We were able to, taking a
8 small amount of money, apply a pretty robust
9 mental health program to all of our SUNY
10 students. So we would like to see either
11 restoration of that or find a way to
12 underwrite and support that piece so we can
13 continue forward with the telehealth
14 especially.

15 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Okay, thank you. I
16 don't think I have anything else right now.

17 I will say that I'm with you, with
18 that football behind you, and I -- but I know
19 Chair Glick, you know, likes getting her
20 shots in at the Jets, which is -- we're an
21 easy target sometimes.

22 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Yeah, an
23 easy mark.

24 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: We'll see. So keep

1 the faith. Thank you, Jim.

2 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: So we go to the
5 Senate. I think we have an additional
6 Senator?

7 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Yes, we found
8 another Senator. Or he found us, as the case
9 may be. Elijah Reichlin-Melnick.

10 SENATOR REICHLIN-MELNICK: Thank you
11 so much, Madam Chair.

12 And thank you, Chancellor.

13 So I just want to ask quickly about
14 community colleges, which have obviously been
15 hit hard over the past year between this 5
16 percent withholding and reduction of state
17 support, the impact of the TAP gap, extra
18 costs associated with COVID such as PPE and
19 cleaning costs, testing, classroom
20 reorganization and reduced enrollment numbers
21 due to the pandemic.

22 Obviously a vibrant community college
23 system is very important to the higher ed
24 community, and it ensures that we've got an

1 educated workforce. It is the path into the
2 middle class for many of our students. So
3 I'm just very concerned about the impact of
4 the loss of revenue on campus budgets.

5 Can you tell me a little bit what the
6 impact do you think is likely to be, and what
7 is the plan to ensure that community
8 colleges are able to stay viable without
9 burdening students any further with
10 additional costs?

11 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you
12 for that question.

13 I think what we have to do is recommit
14 to the community college system. Part of the
15 issue is sometimes folks think that's lesser
16 value, and I would categorically reject that
17 going to a community college is of lesser
18 value and that somehow they are secondary. I
19 think we have phenomenal students in our
20 community college system. I think the
21 pandemic has exacerbated and accelerated the
22 decline. But when you lose a third,
23 basically, of your enrollment over a decade
24 period, that's a real challenge. And

1 enrollment is our goal.

2 So I think by what we are doing is
3 focusing on high-demand areas of
4 certification, focusing on workforce areas
5 that really provide value, changing the
6 meaning of what it means to be a college
7 student, micro-credentialing, a longer period
8 of time. Community colleges don't have to be
9 two years. To a working parent, it could be
10 longer than that, and you can build
11 structures and incentives around that
12 individual. I think that is our challenge
13 going forward.

14 I do think now with the federal
15 partners that we have, I think Dr. Jill Biden
16 is a godsend for the community college system
17 because she understands the community college
18 system. She is a professor of a community
19 college system. She sees the value in the
20 community college system.

21 And I'm going to spend a lot of my
22 activity focused on community colleges as
23 well as EOCs and other important access areas
24 for New York State. Because the thing is, we

1 have the people who need education. When you
2 need more education in the workforce, now
3 more than ever, when 70 percent of all new
4 jobs need some credentialing, when you have
5 5 million New Yorkers who have no
6 post-secondary credentialing at all, when you
7 have 50,000 New Yorkers going outside the
8 State of New York to get educated -- we need
9 to get those folks back. We need to get them
10 engaged. Part of my responsibility as
11 chancellor will be to demystify the process,
12 build things -- solutions around folks.

13 By the way, the Northern Workforce
14 Training Center in Buffalo is one of those
15 important things we have to do more of, put
16 multiple institutions under one roof and
17 build programs around those folks that need
18 that access, who have never had access before
19 in their life. I think we are going to do
20 that in Syracuse, New York, now with the new
21 workforce Development Center. We should be
22 doing that all across the state.

23 I think that's what turns some of this
24 stuff around. I think we need additional

1 investment. I think there's been real
2 strain. But I see an opportunity in this
3 because we can control our own destiny, in
4 many ways, through enrollment. That's what
5 I'm most excited about. But we do need
6 investment as well.

7 SENATOR REICHLIN-MELNICK: Thank you
8 very much, Chancellor.

9 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

10 We go to Assemblywoman Joyner now.

11 ASSEMBLYWOMAN JOYNER: Okay, thank
12 you, Chancellor. I just want to lend my
13 voice for full support of all of the
14 Opportunity Programs, EOP programs, making
15 sure that we fully invest in those very
16 important programs.

17 My question for you -- I have two
18 questions for you this morning. The first
19 one is the budget includes an appropriation
20 calling for a cut of \$46 million. The
21 appropriation calls on the Board of Trustees
22 and Chancellor to decide on how to implement
23 those cuts. What are some plans to minimize
24 the impact of this?

1 And then my second question is we have
2 seen how vital essential workers have been
3 during the pandemic and being, you know, the
4 life line to our state. With a looming
5 shortage in both the teaching and healthcare
6 professions, is SUNY prepared to address
7 these areas of concern within the current
8 budget?

9 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: So thank
10 you for those questions.

11 On the 46 million reduction, we will
12 do -- what we are asking for in the budget is
13 the ability to, if we had to take the
14 reduction, take the reduction in areas that
15 do not impact the core academic mission,
16 student services and other areas. Often what
17 you see in a reduction is an across-the-board
18 reduction. That does then touch on EOP.
19 That does then touch on TAP and other
20 programs. We ask to hold those harmless and
21 then let's focus on nonacademic things, like
22 get rid of administrative costs and other
23 things as much as we can to close that gap.
24 So that's what we were asking for to

1 work on. We would of course work with you in
2 the Legislature so you can see how we are
3 presenting and putting together that plan,
4 that everyone is comfortable with that if we
5 are put in that situation.

6 On essential workers, I think
7 you're -- we have such a great need for more
8 healthcare workers. It's not just nurses,
9 it's respiratory therapists, it's doctors,
10 it's all across the board.

11 We have the capability to educate
12 more. I do think we need some speeding up of
13 our program review. We have a couple of
14 nursing programs that have been sort of
15 hanging out there, and other healthcare
16 programs that have been hanging out there
17 for too long, when you need 250,000 new
18 nurses, for instance, by 2028, we need to
19 start getting those programs up and running
20 now.

21 I do think you mentioned -- many of
22 your colleagues mentioned the community
23 colleges. They're doing a phenomenal job on
24 the healthcare training side. But we need

1 more modern clinical space. For instance,
2 Rockland Community College is a great
3 community college, their nurses are
4 phenomenal students, but they're not dealing
5 with the state-of-the-art clinical space that
6 they should be in order to meet the workforce
7 demand.

8 So I think if you put some of those
9 pieces together that we've asked for, we can
10 meet all of the workforce demand on that area
11 in healthcare, especially because there is a
12 growing demand, including the "BSN in 10"
13 program, where all of our nurses currently in
14 the system have to get their bachelor's
15 within 10 years. That's another demand. So
16 we're creating partnerships within the SUNY
17 system in order to make that happen.

18 So the demand is there, our pieces are
19 there all across the state. We need some
20 help on the clinical side, and we need some
21 help on the program approval side so we can
22 get more of this ramped up faster.

23 ASSEMBLYWOMAN JOYNER: Okay, thank you
24 for your comment.

1 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

2 We go to Assemblywoman Seawright now.

3 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: Thank you,

4 Chairwoman Weinstein.

5 And good morning, Chancellor.

6 Congratulations on your appointment.

7 I just have a couple of questions.

8 I'm a proud SUNY parent, a child at SUNY

9 Albany and at SUNY New Paltz, so we

10 definitely have SUNY in the house.

11 Recently there -- in the Executive

12 Budget there was a reference made to priority

13 admissions for the nursing students. Are

14 there any programs or support that's planned

15 to help these students succeed?

16 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Well,

17 that's a very good question. Yes, you do

18 have two proud SUNY students in your system.

19 I don't pick sides on the best, but you have

20 an aggressive advocate from SUNY New Paltz,

21 of course, which I was just down and visited,

22 and of course University at Albany, my

23 alma mater. So two good choices.

24 I would have to see what we're doing

1 on the support side. We are doing more on
2 the academic support side in order to make
3 sure folks are completing and not feeling
4 abandoned in a program. So we're doing more
5 support coaches and things like that.

6 But I'll check specifically in the
7 nursing and other healthcare programs. I
8 don't know off the top of my head, but I will
9 double-check on that.

10 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: And then
11 another quick question, thank you.

12 Many of the students at the community
13 colleges are eligible for TAP and Pell grants
14 and other financial aid programs. How much
15 would it cost to implement President Biden's
16 pledge for free tuition at SUNY's community
17 colleges?

18 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Well, I
19 don't have that off the top of my head, but I
20 will get that to the committee.

21 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: Okay. And
22 then lastly, my district has a lot of senior
23 citizens, and they love auditing classes. Is
24 SUNY -- what provisions is SUNY making to

1 allow senior citizens to audit classes
2 online?

3 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: So we -- I
4 think we should open up more of our courses.
5 I think the concept of -- the Open SUNY
6 concept of allowing people to come in -- when
7 I was president of Empire State College, we
8 had the Center for Lifelong Learning actually
9 on our campuses, taking class with our
10 faculty -- language courses, other courses.
11 I think we can replicate that across the
12 system.

13 I think you could use the online
14 modality, but I think you could also use the
15 in-person modality. We have beautiful space
16 all across the state. I would work with you
17 on a more robust program. But at Empire
18 State College, we had a really close
19 partnership with the Center for Lifelong
20 Learning, who came, took our classes and
21 things like that. It was great. It was
22 great to have them on our campus, interacting
23 with our other students and participating
24 with our colleagues.

1 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: Terrific.

2 Thank you very much for your leadership,
3 Chancellor.

4 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

5 We go to Assemblywoman Forrest.

6 ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORREST: Thank you.

7 Good morning, Chancellor Mala --
8 Malata -- Malatras. I want to make sure I
9 got it right.

10 So as a SUNY Geneseo graduate, I'm
11 really excited to speak on SUNY issues. One
12 of the issues that we brought up -- that was
13 brought up to me from constituents is that
14 graduate students at SUNY pay astronomical
15 fees compared to CUNY grad students. This is
16 specifically in the case where -- in terms of
17 fees. So -- and it could amount to a couple
18 of thousand dollars.

19 And so they can't get employment as
20 graduate employees until these particular
21 fees are paid. So I guess the question that
22 I have is, do you support efforts to
23 eliminate pay-to-work fees for New York State
24 graduate employees?

1 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: I will
2 definitely look into that. As a graduate
3 student at the State University of New York
4 who did take on student loans and ate a lot
5 of ramen noodles, I have a great soft spot
6 for graduate students and the plight that
7 they have to go through in their studies and
8 economically.

9 But I will definitely work on that
10 with you. I don't -- I don't know enough yet
11 about those different fee structures for the
12 current student. I was a grad student a long
13 time ago. But I will definitely work on that
14 with you. However we can make it easier for
15 our graduate students to thrive, I think we
16 should do it.

17 ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORREST: Especially
18 when we know that students are usually
19 working -- or cannot work, are barred from
20 work while they're pursuing their graduate
21 studies, and so we should eliminate as many
22 barriers as possible.

23 Thank you, Chancellor.

24 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you.

1 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

2 We go to Assemblywoman Griffin.

3 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GRIFFIN: Good morning,
4 Chancellor. Thank you, Chairs.

5 I wanted to ask a couple of questions.

6 I appreciate the \$20 million investment in
7 offshore wind training at Farmingdale and
8 Stony Brook. And I just was curious -- I
9 talk to a lot of college graduates that may
10 have went to other schools, private schools,
11 non-SUNY. And now they're interested in
12 possibly going back to school for renewable
13 energy and sustainability.

14 And I was wondering, is there any plan
15 at SUNY to expand graduate programs where
16 students could get a master's in any of
17 these -- in this field?

18 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: We're
19 looking. We have a couple right now, and
20 we're actually looking -- that's one of the
21 areas on the program that we'd actually like
22 to speed up a little bit. We have a couple
23 of programs right now that have been hanging
24 out there for a while, but I think if we

1 could get those approved, that would give
2 great opportunities.

3 And I think the academy concept that
4 we've talking about, the clean energy, clean
5 jobs academy, there's different access points
6 all across the system where we're kind of
7 aggregating those different programs for
8 folks to understand.

9 And then marrying different
10 concepts -- I was at the Capital District EOC
11 yesterday. Their welding program is
12 phenomenal. But how do you marry the
13 traditional welding program with the turbine
14 program and creation, right? There's a
15 different skill set that you have to marry
16 together.

17 There's 400,000 open welding jobs in
18 the entire country. The average salary I
19 think is like \$80,000 a year. That's no
20 insignificant salary, and lots of jobs. But
21 you can -- have to combine those
22 certifications. So I would do more of that.
23 I think the academy could solve a lot of
24 those issues.

1 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GRIFFIN: Okay,
2 thank you. Another question is a lot of
3 parents in my district search for colleges
4 that have a dedicated special ed program.
5 And often they wind up going to another
6 college, a private college, an independent
7 college, because they don't feel there is a
8 dedicated enough program at the SUNY schools.

9 And I just wondered, have you recently
10 done anything to expand any programs, even if
11 you focused on one SUNY school? Or, you
12 know, is there any program that's really
13 dedicated so a special ed student could go
14 there and know that they're really going to
15 get the attention that they really need?

16 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: On the
17 individual student themselves or the training
18 for the teacher going into special ed?

19 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GRIFFIN: No, I mean for
20 the student themselves. A student with
21 special ed issues.

22 So often they -- SUNY would be a --
23 you know, great schools for New Yorkers but
24 often there isn't -- a family doesn't have

1 confidence in the SUNY -- any of the SUNY --
2 some of the SUNY schools to give that
3 education to their special ed student, so
4 sometimes they wind up going to a private
5 school instead.

6 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: I will look
7 more into that. I have not dove really
8 deeply into this issue yet.

9 The one area I have was on the autism
10 spectrum side. I think we have not provided
11 enough opportunities for those students who
12 need a lot more individualized learning. We
13 created the first Center for Autism
14 Inclusivity, which I talked about at the
15 beginning. Which isn't just about training
16 the workforce for folks who want to provide
17 direct services, but actually providing best
18 practices and training our faculty and staff
19 to better educate those students and make it
20 more acceptable for them to feel welcome and
21 part of the SUNY community.

22 That's starting at Empire State
23 College, but I'd like to see that go
24 systemwide, because I think there's a real

1 need and demand there, and I think they could
2 be highly successful. We have to adapt to
3 their needs, not them adapting to our needs.
4 There's more work to be done in this space,
5 but that's a good first step.

6 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GRIFFIN: Okay, thank
7 you very much.

8 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

9 We go to Assemblyman Englebright now.
10 Steve, are you there?

11 ASSEMBLYMAN ENGLEBRIGHT: Yes. Can
12 you hear me?

13 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes, we can.

14 ASSEMBLYMAN ENGLEBRIGHT: Ah, good.
15 Thank you very much.

16 Congratulations, Chancellor, on your
17 recent appointment. And it's wonderful to
18 listen to you talk about the directions that
19 you're taking our great institution.

20 I have really one primary issue that I
21 wanted to ask you about, and it deals with
22 the operating needs of Stony Brook and the
23 other University Centers, and specifically
24 the need for flexible tuition. I just

1 wondered if you could speak to the
2 possibility of having flexible tuition for
3 the University Centers and what your thoughts
4 might be on that topic.

5 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you
6 for that question, Assemblyman. And thank
7 you for the kind words about being
8 chancellor.

9 I think this is the time. I mean, we
10 forwarded it in our budget submission to
11 allow our University Centers, which are
12 research-heavy. Research institutions are
13 often higher-cost institutions because of lab
14 capacity and other investment capacity that
15 goes into that.

16 We asked to rationalize the policy
17 because in many ways there already is a
18 differential among our University Centers
19 versus our other colleges. It's done in a
20 way that is not as transparent, I don't
21 think. But I think a program like this, we
22 can keep the cost still affordable. I think
23 we are something like still the -- we're in
24 the bottom 10 in a good way, in the lowest

1 tuition in the country, which I think is a
2 good thing for us even where we've been with
3 our predictable tuition program. That's
4 something to be proud of, because that's an
5 investment by the state.

6 But also recognize that our University
7 Centers do need additional resources to
8 improve their research capacity. As long as
9 they're taking a portion of what they're
10 raising in addition, in supporting those
11 students who don't have the means in order to
12 go to college, which they've been very good
13 stewards of, at Stony Brook University in
14 particular. University of Buffalo,
15 Binghamton and Albany have put considerable
16 dollars into additional scholarships and
17 other programs to close some of those gaps.

18 And that would be something, as the
19 Board of Trustees and I work on a plan -- if
20 we are to get this authority -- which we will
21 share with you, that is protecting both
22 access but then institutional research
23 quality by the flexible tuition as well.

24 ASSEMBLYMAN ENGLEBRIGHT: Thank you

1 for your very thoughtful response.

2 You know, and the other thing I want
3 to say is I very much appreciate the focus
4 and emphasis that you have placed on bringing
5 the SUNY system into compliance and indeed
6 exceeding minimum expectations of the CLCPA.
7 Well done. Thank you.

8 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

9 We go to Assemblymember Gandolfo,
10 three minutes.

11 ASSEMBLYMAN GANDOLFO: Thank you,
12 Chairs.

13 And thank you, Chancellor, for being
14 here today.

15 First I want to say I'm happy that we
16 share an alma mater. I'm a SUNY Albany
17 graduate myself, and I have great memories
18 there, especially since when I was there, the
19 Jets were making runs to the AFC
20 championship. So those were great years, and
21 I wish we could go back to them.

22 And I'll start and say I appreciate
23 the comments you made about providing more
24 opportunities for students with autism. I

1 think that's a great initiative and that's a
2 great priority to have.

3 And I just want to loop back to
4 something one of my colleagues in the Senate
5 mentioned earlier, about providing, you know,
6 free speech protections on our campuses. And
7 I appreciate that you mentioned that it is a
8 little bit of a priority for you.

9 You know, it hasn't been too much of a
10 problem on SUNY campuses. We did have the
11 one incident at Binghamton with Art Laffer,
12 which was disappointing.

13 I just wanted to know, are there any
14 plans to issue some kind of directive from
15 the top in terms of providing security for
16 speakers coming to campuses or for, you know,
17 student groups who are tabling, to make sure
18 that they don't kind of get intimidated by
19 groups of protestors and mobs and that they
20 can feel safe on the campus?

21 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you
22 for the question. What we're trying to do is
23 set the tone and provide the opportunities
24 for the free expression of ideas without

1 saying you need -- I don't think we're at the
2 point where as a SUNY institution we need to
3 provide extra protection and support. I
4 think that on some levels -- if we have to
5 get there, maybe. But I think what we're
6 trying to say is let's have an open and
7 honest dialogue. That is the academy.

8 And by the way, it's been happening at
9 our campuses over the past couple of months.
10 There's been many issues of real import --
11 social justice issues, economic justice
12 issues -- that campuses are working through.
13 One of your colleagues mentioned SUNY
14 Geneseo. SUNY Geneseo is one of the most
15 beautiful sunsets you'll ever see in the
16 world, and they have a tree that can be
17 painted with whatever by students. And there
18 was a BLM painting, and then there was a
19 veterans replacement. And that spurred a
20 dialogue and debate, and I think they were
21 able to handle -- students almost handle it
22 in a better way than we have as adults in
23 society in many ways. And we think they
24 should be the model for that.

1 What I would like, though, is to keep
2 that free expression of ideas going. That's
3 what makes the academy great. That's what
4 spurs change and ideas. Often social change
5 comes from higher education. I think the
6 social justice movement -- we all saw the
7 terrible video at the end of May of what
8 happened to Mr. Floyd. But those
9 conversations were happening on our college
10 campuses in real and meaningful ways. I
11 think the pandemic turned it on its head a
12 little bit.

13 But I would rather set the tone as
14 opposed to say we need to put extra
15 protections in place. Because we'll get
16 there if we have to, but I think coming from
17 the top in a different way is the best way of
18 doing it for now. And if we have to adjust
19 it, we will.

20 ASSEMBLYMAN GANDOLFO: All right,
21 thank you, Chancellor. And thank you,
22 Chairs.

23 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

24 We go to Assemblyman Palmesano, three

1 minutes.

2 SENATOR RIVERA: Actually, there's a
3 Senate -- it's Senator Rivera. I just wanted
4 to see if I could get --

5 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Oh, okay. I
6 didn't see his hand.

7 So why don't we go to Senator Rivera.

8 SENATOR RIVERA: Thank you.

9 I just wanted to thank you,
10 Chancellor, for being here and for all the
11 information you've given. I just wanted to
12 make a quick point regarding that last
13 conversation. We've had different versions
14 of the conversation during the morning
15 related to speakers on campus, et cetera. I
16 just wanted to state something just as a --
17 just make a statement and certainly get your
18 input if you'd like.

19 But as somebody who's been a college
20 professor for most of my time in New York
21 State -- I started teaching college in
22 1999 -- I certainly welcome and believe that
23 open discussion is something that is
24 important in the academy.

1 However, it must be stated as a fact
2 that if somebody is a conservative speaker is
3 one thing. If somebody is a fascist, that
4 person should not be allowed on campus. It
5 is my view that if your difference with me is
6 based on your difference on your belief of my
7 humanity, or if you believe that it is -- you
8 strictly -- anybody who is defending fascist
9 talking points, I do not believe it is an
10 equal -- there's -- we should get over this
11 whole equalness of like -- we could have a
12 debate about taxation all day and all night.
13 We can have debates about the -- you know, in
14 education whether you believe in charter
15 schools or you believe in public schools. We
16 can have that conversation all day and all
17 night. We can debate all sorts of policy.

18 However, many -- some of the speakers
19 that we've been -- that have been referenced
20 here and some of the speakers that had this
21 issue across the nation have been folks who
22 are not there to express a different opinion,
23 they're there to express fascist viewpoints.

24 And so I just wanted to kind of state

1 that for the record. Having distinctions --
2 and I'm very glad to say that most of my --
3 the overwhelming majority of the Republican
4 colleagues that I've had over the time that
5 I've been in the Senate have been those type
6 of folks, have been folks who understand that
7 having differences of opinion is important
8 and is good for governance as well as for the
9 academy.

10 But I just wanted to make that point.
11 There's a difference between a difference of
12 opinion and people who defend fascist talking
13 points or who take those positions. And
14 those are folks that I don't necessarily
15 believe should be allowed in the academy, so
16 just -- or anywhere else, for that matter.
17 Just wanted to make that as a statement.

18 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you
19 for that, Senator.

20 And just on that point, we have been
21 very strong on that. I think there's a
22 difference in what the different actions are
23 when there was the events of January 6th. I,
24 with the Board of Trustees, came out very

1 strongly in opposition to those events,
2 because that wasn't speech, that was clearly
3 counter to the democratic ideals of our
4 society.

5 Or when we disagreed with certain
6 executive orders that banned, quote, unquote,
7 divisive topics when they themselves were a
8 way to stifle the free expression of ideas,
9 especially when it comes to racial inequities
10 and structural racism in our society, we call
11 that out as well.

12 I do think you're right, there's a
13 difference I think -- Professor Laffer, he
14 and I disagree economically on I think the
15 approach to economics. But, you know, I
16 think he has a valued voice in the academy.
17 But you're right, there's a difference in
18 some levels that we have to be very mindful
19 of, or is a different sort of activity that
20 we're talking about (inaudible).

21 SENATOR RIVERA: Not that one speaker,
22 but other folks. So I just wanted to make
23 that point. Thank you.

24 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Assemblyman

1 Palmesano now, for three.

2 ASSEMBLYMAN PALMESANO: Thank you,
3 Chancellor, for being here. I appreciate
4 your time.

5 I really just have one area. I don't
6 know if necessarily you can answer this
7 question, but wondering if you can provide
8 this information back to myself and probably
9 members of the Legislature, specifically
10 regarding Clean Energy Funds. As Energy
11 ranker, I'm always very concerned about the
12 impact a number of these programs have on our
13 ratepayers and our taxpayers.

14 So I was wondering, Chancellor, if you
15 might be able to provide to us in a timely
16 fashion a list of all the monies that SUNY
17 uses from all the state clean energy funds,
18 programs like RGGI, the NYSERDA monies, the
19 REV campus challenge. And also details on
20 what this money is being used for, the
21 current status of these projects, what's been
22 worked on, what still needs to be worked on,
23 how much money you have in your coffers to do
24 these projects.

1 I just think that's an important thing
2 for us to have as we move forward, again,
3 to -- as you can recognize, these funds are a
4 tremendous commitment and investment that are
5 paid for through taxpayer dollars and
6 ratepayer dollars on their energy bills.

7 And I just wonder if that's something
8 you can look at and share with us, because I
9 think -- you know, get back to us in a timely
10 manner, because I think as we analyze the
11 budget to see if some of these funds -- what
12 they're being used for, if they're not being
13 used, maybe they should be repurposed for
14 other -- if possible, repurposed for other
15 programs, whether within SUNY or other
16 important programs, to help other important
17 state priorities like helping our nursing
18 home residents or other important state
19 priorities.

20 So I'm just wondering if you could --
21 you and your team would be able to provide to
22 us a list of those monies that, again, that
23 SUNY has through all these clean energy funds
24 like RGGI, NYSERDA, REV Campus Challenge.

1 you're doing.

2 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you.

3 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: I believe we go
4 to the Senate now.

5 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

6 Senator John Liu has a question or
7 two. Three minutes.

8 SENATOR LIU: Thank you, Madam Chair.
9 I'm wondering if we can have Assemblymember
10 Bichotte go first.

11 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Helene, is that
12 all right with you?

13 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: That's fine.
14 Okay, Assemblywoman Bichotte Hermelyn, three
15 minutes.

16 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BICHOTTE HERMELYN:
17 Thank you so much, Senator Liu, my brother.

18 Thank you, Chancellor, for being here,
19 and congratulations on your appointment.

20 I am a SUNY grad from Buffalo State
21 College as well as University of Buffalo.
22 And I also have the best CUNY college in my
23 district, Brooklyn College.

24 I do have a few questions that I will

1 ask, and then if you can answer all of them.

2 And some of them you already touched on.

3 So one of them is while students have
4 been learning remotely now for almost a year,
5 we know that there's a proposal to raise
6 tuition. And this is, you know, virtual
7 learning in the CUNY and SUNY system. But
8 knowing that there's no one in the building,
9 I just don't understand how we can justify
10 raising costs during the high unemployment in
11 the very industries like restaurants that a
12 lot of our students rely on to make ends
13 meet -- and all of this while we're not
14 necessarily using the facility and it's
15 virtual. That's my first question.

16 In addition to that, we are -- I see
17 that there's an investment of \$75 million in
18 dormitory facilities. Again, these very
19 institutions are closed. I know the one in
20 my district, they are not leasing anymore --
21 Brooklyn College was leasing a building for
22 the dormitory; they're not doing that
23 anymore. Can that cost be shifted to, you
24 know, subsidize or help not increase tuition?

1 And as we talk about tuition, I want
2 to talk about the TAP gap. I see that in the
3 Executive Budget is like a 13.1 million deep
4 freeze -- again, due to the enrollment
5 declines that says, you know, it's prior year
6 over year. The program continues to support
7 the DREAM Act. Has that been cut at all?

8 And why would we want to cut the TAP
9 funding when we already have a TAP gap? We
10 need to kind of look at that.

11 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Can we leave a
12 few seconds for the chancellor to respond.

13 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BICHOTTE HERMELYN: Yes.

14 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Well, thank
15 you for that, and thank you for going to Buff
16 State and UB. Buff State, I was at Buff
17 State and UB on Sunday. The Bengals are
18 great, and the Bison.

19 On the tuition question, we did not
20 raise tuition this year. We're asking for
21 the authorization to continue the predictable
22 tuition -- not that we're going to raise it
23 every year, but to have the ability to make
24 those considerations when doing budgeting.

1 But just for clarity, we did not raise
2 tuition this year because of the issues that
3 you raise. That's important to us.

4 We are a little different than CUNY.
5 We have students on our campus. We have
6 about 150,000 students on campus currently.
7 So we have a hybrid model in many ways. But
8 we didn't raise tuition anyway. And in fact
9 we've reduced some of our fees because we're
10 not providing those services, so we've
11 reduced some of our fees.

12 So the dormitory, for instance,
13 investment, we're using our facilities. We
14 have folks in our dormitories. Many of our
15 dormitories have been used for isolation and
16 quarantine space as well. So SUNY at
17 least -- it may be different than CUNY -- we
18 have different costs associated with it,
19 because we've borne real costs this year,
20 almost in a weirder way because of the
21 pandemic. But we do have students on our
22 campus, although much reduced. But we have
23 campuses open, it's not all online.

24 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BICHOTTE HERMELYN:

1 Okay, thank you.

2 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you
3 very much.

4 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BICHOTTE HERMELYN: Just
5 one quick question?

6 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.
7 We -- we go to the Senate. Senator Liu, I
8 believe, had a question?

9 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Yes.

10 Senator John Liu. Turn your mute off.

11 SENATOR LIU: Yeah, thank you very
12 much.

13 Well, I want to thank the chancellor
14 and his team for taking on the additional
15 challenge of running our -- really our, you
16 know, star school system in New York State.

17 My question has to do with an earlier
18 question about the cost of tuition for
19 community colleges, given what we're seeing
20 nationally, which is a good trend, and the
21 new administration, the Biden administration,
22 looking at community colleges, continuing off
23 what President Obama had envisioned.

24 What -- we should have, at this point,

1 some kind of cost impact or cost -- what's it
2 take to make tuition free at the community
3 colleges? And furthermore, I'm wondering
4 what the cost impact would be of making SUNY
5 tuition free for all. I assume you have
6 readily available the amount of revenues
7 that are derived by tuition.

8 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: We can
9 definitely provide that to you, Senator.
10 Thank you for -- I agree, SUNY is one of the
11 best systems ever created in the history of
12 the world. I think it has provided access.
13 And I'm not just saying that because I'm the
14 chancellor; I'm also a graduate several times
15 over.

16 The community college piece we'll put
17 together is just numbers. Right? Our
18 community college tuition is set at the local
19 level. So our tuition for our community
20 colleges ranges -- it varies from 4900 all
21 the way up to 50-something hundred dollars a
22 semester. So we'll provide that to you, I
23 just don't have it off the top of my head, so
24 I don't want to give you a joint round number

1 that may not be right. But we'll provide it
2 to the committees for sure, what the total
3 cost of our tuition revenue across the system
4 is for you.

5 SENATOR LIU: Okay. But, you know,
6 just broadly speaking, we should have readily
7 available how much of the SUNY budget is
8 relying upon tuition payments. I'm not
9 pressing you on that right now, I'm just
10 saying it's got to be a number, I'm guessing,
11 maybe a billion and a half to 2 billion. But
12 I don't know. That's just off the top of my
13 head.

14 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: You're the
15 numbers guy. I'm not --

16 SENATOR LIU: Listen, just because I'm
17 Asian doesn't mean I'm just a numbers guy.

18 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: No,
19 comptroller, you got the whole --

20 SENATOR LIU: Before my time runs out,
21 since so many mentions were made of your
22 alma mater, Albany, and Stony Brook and
23 Farmingdale, Geneseo and others, I've got to
24 make sure that Binghamton is in the mix as

1 well. So a shout out to SUNY Binghamton, my
2 alma mater.

3 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: By the way,
4 Stanley Whittingham -- I thought someone
5 would mention the lithium ion battery. These
6 state-of-the-art batteries are being
7 developed in Binghamton, New York. Actually
8 students worked together to put up start-up
9 companies that will have a giga factory built
10 there. They are doing amazing things in that
11 space. It's remarkable. Binghamton -- I
12 love Binghamton.

13 SENATOR LIU: Good to hear. Thank
14 you.

15 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.
16 Assembly.

17 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

18 Yes, we go to Assemblyman Smith, three
19 minutes.

20 ASSEMBLYMAN SMITH: Thank you,
21 Madam Chair.

22 And thank you to our new SUNY
23 chancellor. Welcome. It's so good to have
24 you here. Exciting times we're in.

1 I wasn't going to speak but I do feel
2 compelled to just note something two of my
3 colleagues -- actually, three of my
4 colleagues mentioned the idea of protecting
5 student voices on campus. Now, last year I
6 was the ranker of Higher Ed, and at the
7 budget hearing this time I did not bring up
8 the incident that actually happened in
9 November of 2019, because I felt that it was
10 kind of a settled issue.

11 But I do feel, as the incoming
12 chancellor, to bring up this issue. In
13 November of 2019 an economist, Art Laffer,
14 that was referenced, did attempt to make a
15 speech and presentation at SUNY Binghamton.
16 And a few days before his speech, there was a
17 group of students who were
18 conservative-leaning students tabling on
19 campus, and it was widely reported, video,
20 shocking video, of them being completely shut
21 down in their ability to share their
22 thoughts.

23 Now, they did have a poster that was
24 promoting the Second Amendment, something

1 maybe a little controversial. But again,
2 it's a college campus and promoting
3 discussion about controversial ideas is
4 something that we routinely encourage. They
5 were completely shut down. Physically, their
6 table was disheveled, the campus police at
7 SUNY Binghamton had to come and respond to
8 protect the students and break up the
9 situation.

10 Following that -- and I mention this
11 because I was the only Assemblymember to
12 actually directly engage with Binghamton's
13 president -- I said, What the heck happened
14 here? They did a review, and I said, Okay,
15 well, we have this economist coming to speak
16 at your campus, somebody who the students had
17 I believe raised about \$90,000 in private
18 funds to get him to come and speak, including
19 travel and hotel. And I said to the campus
20 president, I would suggest you call in the
21 State Police, because this is something that
22 if this speaker is not allowed to engage
23 students -- and again, it's Art Laffer. I
24 mean, with all due respect to him, not

1 exactly the most controversial -- Reagan
2 economist, but he was advising Trump at the
3 time, so I think students were -- you know,
4 maybe tempers were a little bit high.

5 So the gentleman, Art Laffer, shows up
6 to give his speech. Within 10 minutes, and
7 it's all caught on video, students shouted
8 him down. Police, local police had to arrest
9 two individuals. There were some people that
10 were not campus students, but from around the
11 surrounding community that came to disrupt
12 the speech.

13 So when my colleagues bring up this
14 issue, it is a legitimate concern, as we're
15 talking about diversity of thought and
16 diversity of ideas. And while I can respect,
17 you know, we don't want -- you know, we
18 wouldn't want a dictator from another country
19 coming to speak or someone who is provoking
20 or promoting violence, I can agree with that.

21 I do think when we have basic
22 Republican or conservative-leaning speakers,
23 the least we can do is make sure that they're
24 allowed to freely express their ideas.

1 So again, my time is about to expire.
2 I really do hope, because this has been an
3 issue, that this is something that can be
4 addressed. We really do want to protect the
5 ability.

6 Thank you, Chancellor.

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

8 And I just have, before we go to --
9 before we go for seconds, I just had two
10 quick things to say.

11 First, on behalf of one of my
12 colleagues who wanted to ask about publicly
13 available charging stations on all SUNY
14 campuses, I'm wondering if they are available
15 for students and faculty.

16 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you,
17 Chair. Many of our campuses do in fact have
18 charging stations. We built them at Empire
19 State College. If you go to many of our
20 college campuses today, you'll have charging
21 stations at the campuses.

22 I don't know if we've mandated that as
23 a matter of SUNY policy, but that is
24 something that many of our campuses -- mainly

1 because it's been student-driven, actually,
2 the students want that infrastructure on our
3 campuses. So if you go to many of our
4 campuses, they have the charging stations.

5 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: That's great.
6 And even though Downstate isn't in my
7 district, I'm glad we're calling it Downstate
8 again.

9 Even though Downstate is not in my
10 district, a lot of my constituents both work
11 there and use the hospital. So I know that
12 Dr. Riley has really appreciated the working
13 relationship. He came to visit the campus
14 and that's -- you know, we in our delegation
15 feel very strongly about the importance of
16 the medical school and the hospital to our
17 community and to all of Brooklyn.

18 You noted how it was a COVID-only
19 hospital and people really went the extra
20 mile. So that is near and dear to all of us
21 in Brooklyn, both constituents and our
22 delegation.

23 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: May I give
24 one pitch to Downstate? Not only was it a

1 COVID-only hospital, they were among the
2 fastest to vaccinate, use all their
3 vaccinations distributed to them in that way.
4 And I looked at that vaccination process, it
5 was phenomenal.

6 Not only are they providing access to
7 students from communities of color that
8 normally would not have access to medical
9 schools, they are providing critical access
10 to medical students. They are doing
11 innovative research. We don't often look at
12 Downstate as research -- they are mapping the
13 brain right now, using big data in ways that
14 no other institution is. And that faculty
15 member is from the PRODiG program.

16 So they've got a lot of good stuff
17 going on at Downstate right now that we want
18 to just keep rising up and applauding. It's
19 phenomenal.

20 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: That's great.
21 And perhaps once we get some money, we can
22 figure out a garage space for them. When I
23 have gone to meetings there, it takes forever
24 to try and find a place to park and --

1 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: All the
2 medical students, that's their number-one
3 complaint, is parking at SUNY Downstate.

4 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: And just on a
5 personal note, Jim, it's -- I very much enjoy
6 seeing you in this new role. Having survived
7 our late colleague, Assemblyman Brodsky,
8 you're certainly ready for this job. And
9 your testimony today has shown that.

10 I'm going to turn it over to the
11 Senate now. Do you have a --

12 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: I thought Deborah
13 Glick might have a second round --

14 (Overtalk.)

15 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Oh, yes. Yes,
16 Deborah has -- okay, we'll go to Deborah
17 Glick for her second round.

18 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: (Inaudible.)

19 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

20 Okay, Deborah? Five minutes.

21 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: I'm going to try
22 to keep my video on, but if it starts to
23 freeze, I'm going to kick it off.

24 Thank you, Jim. I have only five

1 minutes, so -- and I have 10 questions.

2 So let me just say for the record I've
3 gone back to my notes and SED approves
4 programs, 84 percent happen in 60 days,
5 95 percent within 90 days. Now, there
6 certainly are outliers, and I think you've
7 enumerated some of them. But we can talk
8 more about that.

9 A couple of quick questions. Are
10 there going to be any limits -- as you
11 distribute cuts across the system, will there
12 be a benchmark, like no more than 5 percent
13 or no more than 10 percent to any particular
14 campus?

15 What is the situation with bandwidth
16 for remote colleges? Despite the 98 percent
17 coverage alleged by the Executive, there are
18 lots of places where that just is not true.

19 What are you doing to build an alumni
20 base? I really feel like there are millions
21 of New Yorkers who have come out of SUNY.
22 And, you know, I get a solicitation from
23 CUNY; I'm not sure what you're doing about
24 SUNY.

1 And if you could give us a list of
2 what you see as the high-demand certificates.
3 We don't have to go into it now, but it would
4 be helpful to have a list of what that
5 actually means.

6 And where are you -- I mean, the one
7 thing that has been a longstanding annoyance,
8 the requirements for postgraduate for
9 Excelsior is really you have to stay in the
10 state for five years. You could sit at home
11 with mom and do flower arranging.

12 But if you have gotten a STEM
13 scholarship, which requires you to be in the
14 top 10 percent of your high school and to
15 complete a STEM program at any of our SUNY or
16 CUNY schools, you then have to have
17 five years working in a STEM field, which may
18 or may not be available to you if you are,
19 you know, wanting to live in certain parts of
20 the state. And then it becomes a loan. So
21 that seems like an inequity that is very
22 concerning.

23 And then finally, what are our
24 out-of-state tuitions at our

1 University Centers?

2 I know it's a long list, and if we
3 don't have time, you can get those to us.
4 But a few of them are just kind of
5 throwaways -- not throwaways, but, you know,
6 should be quick.

7 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Sure.
8 There's a lot there, so if I miss something,
9 Chair, you will let me know.

10 On the tuition side, the out-of-states
11 I can get you. It's -- it's, you know, more.
12 It's in the \$18,000 average range, or
13 something like that. But I'll get you that
14 list. It's actually still lower than many of
15 our border states competition-wise. I think
16 New Jersey and Connecticut's out-of-state
17 tuition rate is still higher. So it's an
18 affordable option, which is very good.

19 On the side of the broadband, we did a
20 lot of good work setting up stopgap measures
21 like WiFi. I partner with Adirondack --
22 Adirondack Community College is one of those
23 perfect examples that you've mentioned.
24 They're a more rural community. Access is an

1 issue. It's not always -- it's not -- it's
2 affordability and access. There's two
3 component pieces to that.

4 We set up WiFi banks for our students
5 so at least they had opportunities to connect
6 remotely.

7 We're also partnering with something
8 called Eduroam to allow free WiFi throughout
9 the different colleges no matter where you're
10 a student of. So if you go somewhere else,
11 you have the same privileges and access to
12 the broadband capacity among our SUNY
13 campuses. We haven't fully built that out
14 yet, but I think going forward that is a
15 really important thing for us.

16 And then there was a couple of other
17 things you threw in there, but I --

18 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Building an
19 alumni --

20 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: We'll get
21 you the high-demand certificate areas that
22 we're thinking of. In fact, we'll even
23 convene -- we have a working group of several
24 of our community college representatives,

1 presidents, who have been helping me with
2 that. Which we'll just -- we should just
3 convene a meeting to talk through some of
4 those areas that they've been looking at on
5 that.

6 And on the alumni base, that --I think
7 that is something we should do a heck of a
8 lot more on. I'm relatively new, I'm trying
9 to get through COVID and all this other stuff
10 first. But we have an untapped database of
11 fellow alums. We've got to get them jazzed
12 and reengaged in the mission and direction of
13 the system. There's so many great pieces
14 behind that.

15 I mean, I know Oswego, Al Roker is
16 like their prime guy. But we've got lots of
17 Al Rokers out there that we want to support.
18 And by the way, 62 members of the Legislature
19 now are alums of SUNY. I think it's the
20 highest number of SUNY alums we've ever had
21 in the Legislature. So that's great. So
22 like we want to use you guys too, you know,
23 and trumpet all the good work that SUNY has
24 produced.

1 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: And the last
2 thing is the different treatment between
3 certain scholarships for post -- in the
4 postgraduate period.

5 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: The STEM
6 one I remember, that was a scholarship that
7 was done earlier on. And I think that was to
8 get people in the STEM field. So we'd have
9 to revisit that one. I don't know how well
10 that program's going.

11 On the Excelsior side, I believe 80 or
12 85 percent of all graduates stay in New York
13 anyway, of SUNY graduates. So we are good
14 that most of our students stay in New York.

15 I know there is an exemption process
16 of -- for the Excelsior Scholarship, so if
17 you do have a circumstance where you need to
18 leave the state, I think there are those
19 exemptions made.

20 But I agree, we should look at the --
21 I think this goes back to the lifelong
22 learning process of a -- maybe a full-time
23 worker or a parent who wants to go back to
24 community college who needs more than two

1 years, and how do you build incentive
2 structures around them. I think we should
3 have that larger conversation. Because if
4 you're going to adapt and modernize the
5 public university system, you have to meet
6 the needs of the modern student, which is
7 often older, often workers, often going
8 through a transitional economy, pieces that
9 we're not really geared to do yet. But I
10 think there's a lot of opportunity for us
11 there.

12 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you very
13 much.

14 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

15 We go to the Senate, I think for our
16 last questioner.

17 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Yes, Senator Toby
18 Stavisky, second round, five minutes.

19 Toby, are you there?

20 THE MODERATOR: Senator, you are
21 muted.

22 SENATOR STAVISKY: Okay, sorry. Very
23 hard to -- I can only mute myself.

24 Chancellor, I'm delighted that you

1 mentioned SUNY Binghamton, because it's my
2 recollection that Professor Whittingham won
3 the Nobel Prize in Chemistry a couple of
4 years ago.

5 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Yeah,
6 SUNY's.

7 SENATOR STAVISKY: Absolutely.

8 Real quick, you've mentioned the
9 importance of the nursing programs. I have
10 heard from quite a number of people who are
11 saying that they're having difficulties
12 because they don't have the patient contact
13 that's necessary, you can only do so much
14 remotely. And how would you address that
15 issue?

16 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you,
17 Senator, for that. There have been some
18 issues specifically now with clinical
19 opportunities in hospitals to complete their
20 clinical work because of COVID. And that has
21 limited the number of spaces on some levels.

22 And the other challenge has been some
23 of our programs have actually run into
24 problems because of COVID, they've actually

1 tested positive in the clinical setting in
2 hospitals.

3 So we're hopeful, past this year, it
4 frees up some more of that space.

5 I think there's an important role for
6 an online clinical component, but I do think
7 you need to be in the actual direct
8 healthcare provision of services while you're
9 being trained. So we want to grow that
10 opportunity.

11 And just my final point on all nursing
12 and everything, because Senator Liu and
13 others have raised it. We're really proud
14 that the state, including the Legislature,
15 invests so much in us. It's something like
16 \$7 billion a year. And we just hope that we
17 can turn that investment into more
18 opportunities for our students, nursing being
19 one of those primary areas for sure. There's
20 a lot of need right now.

21 SENATOR STAVISKY: Yes. And I think
22 it requires additional work and perhaps even
23 partnerships with the nonpublic institutions.

24 Last question. You've been talking

1 about online and out-of-state. How do you
2 deal with the higher education institutions
3 that are out of state advertising extensively
4 on television, such as Phoenix or Southern
5 New Hampshire? And I'm sure they are drawing
6 students away from SUNY and CUNY.

7 How would you address that issue?

8 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: I think we
9 have to demonstrate what we are to students
10 in New York State. The fact that we have
11 50,000 New Yorkers right now going to those
12 programs is something that we have to do a
13 better job of communicating. It's not just,
14 here's a great advertising campaign. What
15 kind of education are you getting beyond
16 that?

17 We have all the same things that those
18 schools do. And not to be a little
19 provocative, I think we're better than
20 Southern New Hampshire. I think we're better
21 than Phoenix Online. I think we do it all.
22 We don't have \$90 million in advertising.

23 One of those schools that you
24 mentioned advertises \$90 million worth of

1 revenue a year. That triples, quadruples
2 what some of our state support for our
3 campuses are, in their total budgets. We
4 can't compete with that.

5 But I think, getting back to
6 Assemblymember Glick's point of we have a
7 fantastic alumni base, how do we build in
8 those lines of communication? What resonates
9 with prospective students to not go to those
10 schools, but go to these schools because who
11 do they resonate with? Alumni. Targeted
12 advertising. Reaching into high schools,
13 like Chair Mayer said, and others.

14 I think there's lots of opportunities,
15 but it's my job as chancellor, I'm going to
16 spend a lot of time coming out of COVID
17 focusing on just that. Project 50,000 is
18 getting all 50,000 of those students back,
19 increasing our enrollment and stopping them
20 from going to those for-profit privateers
21 that don't give as much educational quality
22 as we can.

23 SENATOR STAVISKY: And many of these
24 students {inaudible; microphone cut out}

1 New York {inaudible; microphone cut out}.
2 That's another base to perhaps bring them
3 back.

4 Thank you very much, Chancellor.

5 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you.

6 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.
7 Assembly.

8 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: So quickly,
9 seeing no hands raised, thank you so much for
10 being here today. And we look forward to
11 some of the follow-up -- follow-ups to some
12 of the questions that were asked. Thank you.

13 SUNY CHANCELLOR MALATRAS: Thank you.

14 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We're going to
15 be moving on to the CUNY chancellor, Félix
16 Rodríguez.

17 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

18 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: So, Chancellor,
19 we are -- I see you're in the Zoom. We are
20 ready to begin.

21 You get up to 10 minutes to make your
22 presentation, then I know there are --
23 members will have questions. So you want to
24 begin?

1 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So thank
2 you, and good morning to Chairs Krueger,
3 Weinstein, Stavisky and Glick, and the
4 members of the Senate Finance, Assembly Ways
5 and Means, and Senate and Assembly Higher
6 Education Committees and their staff and
7 their guests. I am Félix Matos Rodríguez,
8 chancellor of the City University of
9 New York.

10 (Zoom interruption.)

11 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Thank you
12 so much for this opportunity to testify this
13 morning. It is quite the understatement to
14 say that a lot has changed since the last
15 time I appeared before you a year ago, but I
16 am proud to share today how the City
17 University of New York stood strong against a
18 relentless pandemic and outline our
19 priorities, plans, and goals for the coming
20 fiscal year and beyond.

21 On behalf of the entire CUNY
22 community, I want to thank Governor Cuomo,
23 the State Senate, and the State Assembly for
24 your past and sustained support, which has

1 enabled CUNY to deliver strong results for
2 our half a million students and the citizens
3 of New York.

4 2020 was a year that both demanded and
5 inspired great fortitude and resourcefulness
6 from our students, faculty, staff and
7 leaders. The coronavirus was largely a
8 remote concern when the year began, but it
9 soon gained a foothold in New York that
10 forced CUNY to all but shut down its
11 25 campuses on March 12th and quickly pivot
12 to distance education. When classes resumed
13 after a week-long academic recess, 95 percent
14 of the university's 50,000 course sections
15 had transitioned to online instruction.

16 We quickly realized that thousands of
17 students lacked the tools to participate in
18 distance learning, and with support from the
19 Governor, we purchased 33,000 laptops and
20 tablets and made sure they were safely
21 distributed to students in need, as well as
22 provided 4,000 personal hotspots for those
23 students who required enhanced WiFi
24 capability.

1 I want to emphasize that these efforts
2 will not stop when the pandemic is over. We
3 enthusiastically support the Governor's
4 proposal to require all internet providers in
5 the state to offer affordable broadband
6 service to low-income households.

7 Early in the COVID-19 crisis, we
8 established the Chancellor's Emergency Relief
9 Fund. With \$1 million from the Petrie
10 Foundation and another million from the James
11 and Judith Dimon Foundation, we started, and
12 by the fall, support from additional donors
13 grew the fund to more than \$8 million and
14 allowed us to distribute emergency grants to
15 more than 10,000 students. Individual
16 colleges and schools raised more than
17 \$8.6 million in addition, enabling them to
18 help thousands of students more, for a total
19 of nearly \$17 million in emergency relief
20 funds across the university.

21 We were also among the first systems
22 in the nation to disburse the \$118 million in
23 student emergency grants that were funded by
24 the federal CARES Act. In the end, we

1 distributed grants to about 200,000 students,
2 averaging \$600 each.

3 The perseverance and accomplishments
4 came amid a backdrop of widespread grief.
5 CUNY campuses and the central office have
6 been deeply saddened by the loss to COVID-19
7 of many dear members of our community,
8 including 22 staff members, 16 faculty, four
9 students, and countless CUNY retirees and
10 alumni. Among them you might remember --
11 because he was here with me last year -- was
12 Allen Lew, who was our senior vice chancellor
13 for facilities, planning and construction --
14 the first Asian-American chancellor in CUNY's
15 history -- that we lost to the pandemic.

16 The university has a website now in
17 honor of all those that we lost; it's a page
18 called "In Memoriam" in tribute to those that
19 we have lost.

20 Through it all, we stayed the course
21 and the students pressed on. This past
22 academic year, CUNY conferred 56,527 degrees,
23 the second-highest total in our history and
24 just shy of the record high awarded the year

1 before.

2 Looking ahead to life after COVID, we
3 redoubled our efforts to help our students
4 succeed, graduate on time and find
5 sustainable career paths. Among the most
6 important developments were a plan to expand
7 mental health services on campuses and a new
8 partnership, the New York Jobs CEO Council,
9 which is working with the CEOs from 27 of the
10 largest employers in the New York area to
11 create a pipeline to job opportunities for
12 25,000 CUNY students.

13 We also focused our professional
14 development training to help 3,400 faculty
15 become better online teachers, part of a
16 larger, longer-range initiative to improve
17 pedagogy and teaching at CUNY.

18 These efforts will be greatly aided by
19 a pair of \$10 million gifts from foundations
20 that are great CUNY partners. One of the
21 investments, from Bank of New York Mellon,
22 will support innovative educational programs
23 and workplace initiatives that will help
24 train 40,000 underserved students for

1 high-demand jobs, closing equity gaps and
2 supporting the region's post-pandemic
3 economic recovery.

4 The other grant, from the Andrew W.
5 Mellon Foundation, will advance CUNY programs
6 in Black and ethnic studies and the
7 humanities, and expand a program that
8 provides a pathway to careers in the arts for
9 students from underrepresented communities.
10 The gift also contributed \$2.5 million to the
11 student emergency relief fund. This \$10
12 million award is the largest gift the Mellon
13 Foundation has ever made to CUNY in their
14 45 years of support.

15 Since I was appointed chancellor a
16 year and a half ago, we have continued to
17 assemble a cabinet and college presidents of
18 unprecedented expertise and diversity who
19 reflect the city we live in and the students
20 that we serve. The Board of Trustees has
21 appointed nine new presidents during my
22 tenure, the last two this past Monday, at
23 Lehman and Guttman Community College. They
24 include the first two Asian-Americans to ever

1 serve as presidents of CUNY, three women, and
2 three African-Americans.

3 Now let me turn to the Governor's
4 Executive Budget proposal. We fully
5 understand the large fiscal challenge that
6 the state is facing in the upcoming fiscal
7 year, and commit to being good partners by
8 continuing our responsible fiscal stewardship
9 of this university. We also appreciate,
10 despite the enormous fiscal challenge, the
11 Governor's plan maintaining close to
12 \$2.4 billion in support for CUNY, including
13 full funding for financial aid and
14 opportunity programs that support our
15 neediest students.

16 We also recognize the generous support
17 we receive from the state -- for debt
18 service, fringe benefits and other campus
19 operating expenses -- that will enable us to
20 protect our core academic mission in tough
21 fiscal times.

22 We are pleased that the Governor's
23 plan continues stability for our critical
24 opportunity programs, SEEK and College

1 Discovery, as well as continues to include
2 \$4 million for Open Educational Resources,
3 OER for short. The OER program, originally
4 started by Governor Cuomo, is funding that we
5 have leveraged to significantly reduce the
6 costs of textbooks to our students. Our
7 students saved over \$50 million in textbook
8 costs over the last four years, which amounts
9 to students saving \$12 for every \$1 invested
10 by the State of New York.

11 I would like to take a few minutes to
12 address the issue of tuition. The capacity
13 to adapt and plan ahead is critical to
14 effective leadership, and we welcome the
15 flexibility that the Governor's proposal to
16 extend the Predictable Tuition policy through
17 2025 gives us. Students who are in the most
18 need continue to have any additional
19 out-of-pocket tuition costs significantly or
20 completely covered by New York's generous
21 financial aid programs -- TAP, Excelsior,
22 SEEK, College Discovery, and the Peralta
23 DREAM Act -- along with federal Pell grants.

24 We are also appreciative of the

1 proposal to establish lower tuition rates for
2 high-demand certificate programs.

3 CUNY's budget request takes into
4 account our needs as well as the current
5 fiscal environment. Our focus is on
6 responding to the pandemic and jump-starting
7 New York's economic resurgence. Some of the
8 initiatives for which we are seeking support
9 include prioritizing student mental health,
10 creating a nursing pipeline program, forging
11 connections with private industry partners to
12 create career pathways for our students,
13 expanding the successful CUNY Corps
14 internship program, and enhancing diversity
15 within our full-time faculty ranks.

16 We are also seeking crucial capital
17 budget support to enhance our IT systems, the
18 needs of which have come to the forefront due
19 to our transition to online learning.

20 I would be remiss if I did not add
21 that our budget request and our future
22 outlook is predicated upon the assumption
23 that there will be significant additional
24 financial support from the federal government

1 to New York State and New York City. If this
2 assistance is not forthcoming, our outlook
3 would change significantly.

4 Capital construction is known to be a
5 strong engine to restart the economy. CUNY
6 has been a major part of that process in our
7 recovery for the state. And for every
8 \$100 million in construction spending, nearly
9 1,000 direct and indirect jobs are created in
10 the local economy. And with our continued
11 commitment to supplier diversity, we continue
12 to support state-certified MWBE vendors,
13 which we have done at the rate of 30 percent.

14 I know my time has expired; this was
15 an abridged version of my full testimony,
16 which I will submit for the record, and hope
17 that all of you will have the chance to read.

18 Thank you again for your support.
19 Happy to take any questions. And I also want
20 to introduce four members of my team that are
21 joining me here today: Our university
22 provost, José Luis Cruz; our chief operating
23 officer, Héctor Batista; and our chief
24 financial officer, Matt Sapienza.

1 So thank you so much for your support,
2 and happy to take any questions that you
3 might have.

4 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We do have
5 questions. And just want you to know that
6 your testimony was distributed to all members
7 of the -- who are here, and even those who
8 haven't joined us today.

9 I go to our Higher Ed chair for
10 10 minutes, Deborah Glick.

11 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you. I
12 don't think it's letting me turn on my
13 video -- which is okay, because that saves
14 the bandwidth.

15 It's good to see you, even if you
16 can't see me.

17 I have several questions. I have
18 10 minutes. So I'm going to give you a few
19 of those questions up front and then if you
20 don't have them immediately, you can get them
21 to the committee.

22 One is, what is the current dimension
23 of the TAP gap? And how much do you have in
24 accounts receivable from students who,

1 because of their inability to pay certain
2 fees, might have the withholding of
3 transcripts or the inability to re-register?
4 So those two numbers would be helpful.

5 And what your current faculty-student
6 ratio is and whether that's full-time
7 faculty.

8 On your enrollment numbers, I'm
9 wondering how much you're down, if you are
10 down, and if so, I've heard that there are
11 less students applying for college, which
12 would make sense from three points of view:
13 One, their families may have lost income, so
14 they're uncomfortable about making the
15 commitment to college.

16 But I also think that they are more
17 disconnected from school and any counseling,
18 and I'm wondering if you've had discussions
19 with Chancellor Carranza on what support
20 students are getting in terms of being able
21 to understand that they could apply, that
22 they have both TAP, they may be eligible for
23 Pell, there may be some other scholarships
24 that they could access that would make it

1 possible for them to actually begin their
2 college careers.

3 One of the issues that has been raised
4 has been in the course of the online
5 learning, some of the -- there are
6 differences in the use of platforms, so that
7 certain professors may be using a Zoom-type
8 platform, but some others are using
9 Blackboard, and students are complaining
10 about the fact that they're having trouble,
11 even though they've been given laptops or
12 tablets, moving between these different
13 platforms in order to -- {mic dropout}.

14 So if you could begin responding with
15 those myriad questions, I would appreciate
16 it.

17 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Well
18 again, thank you so much. And I'm happy that
19 Queens College is sending you alumni requests
20 for donations, and I hope that you are being
21 generous in responding back. And thank you
22 for your support. And as usual, I bring you
23 greetings on behalf of the 606 students who
24 go to CUNY schools who are part of your

1 district. So thank you for your support.

2 Let me take several of the things that
3 you asked me, and then maybe some of the
4 others we can send you the information to
5 your team.

6 The amount of money on receivables is
7 around \$66 million. I do want to stress that
8 even though there's been a lot of
9 conversation out there about bursar holds, in
10 the past two semesters our campuses have been
11 incredibly flexible in allowing students that
12 might have some level of debt to register for
13 the classes, to keep the academic momentum,
14 and are working with them in finding
15 alternate ways to be able to secure funding
16 and do payment plans and do different kinds
17 of things to be able to support them, in
18 addition to the fact that we have fundraised
19 dollars to support the students.

20 Part of that Mellon grant I mentioned
21 to you put about \$2 million exclusively to
22 support these kinds of students moving
23 forward. The first million we used for the
24 fall; the next million we're using now for

1 the spring. And a lot, also, of the
2 individual fundraising that we have done,
3 either from the Chancellor's Emergency Fund
4 or the funds on the campuses, has gone to be
5 able to assist some of the students that
6 might have small amounts of debts so they can
7 register and continue their education.

8 So things have been very, very
9 sensible, given what we're facing with the
10 pandemic and what the students are facing.
11 And also redirecting students who might have
12 lost a job or in their family lost -- a
13 family member lost their job, to reapply for
14 financial aid, to look at the new package to
15 see if they qualify for additional
16 assistance. So that's the status of that
17 information.

18 I'll have Matt Sapienza send you the
19 numbers for the TAP gap.

20 You asked me about the ratio of
21 faculty to students. That ratio has been,
22 for the past five years, consistent between
23 21 and 22. Right now it's at 22. It grew
24 just a little bit last year; a couple of

1 years before it was at 22. So there's been
2 incredible consistency in that ratio all
3 through the system for the past -- for the
4 past five years.

5 And we follow -- we look at that ratio
6 very, very closely. That ratio is
7 systemwide, and I don't believe that is
8 broken down by part-time and full-time
9 faculty, so I can try to get you that
10 breakdown. So that number that I'm providing
11 talks about instruction overall across the
12 system.

13 You talked about enrollment loss, and
14 we're very, very concerned about that,
15 particularly at the community college level.
16 It's a national trend, we know that, and it's
17 a trend that started before the pandemic and
18 got accelerated by the pandemic.

19 But again, our team has been tapping
20 on all doors to be able to bring students
21 back. The university provost and his team
22 has been working with the DOE, identifying
23 about 800 students that we thought were going
24 to come from graduation from the New York

1 City public schools in May, did not show up
2 in the fall, and we're following up
3 aggressively to see why they didn't show up.

4 So again, we're doing -- because we
5 have such a good collaboration with the DOE,
6 we're really looking at their students to
7 make sure that we didn't lose any students in
8 this COVID transition.

9 We also put about a million dollars
10 over the summer, with money that came from
11 the Petrie Foundation and the Bloomberg
12 Foundation, for a "summer melt" program that
13 actually paid our CUNY students to serve as
14 mentors to students that were coming from the
15 DOE, to avoid the summer melt. So we kept
16 the momentum of the students coming, and we
17 put money in the pockets of our students over
18 the summer and created mentorships.

19 So we've been really working very hard
20 to make sure that we bring all the students
21 into our system. And we have a strike force
22 just working on the enrollment issue for the
23 spring.

24 The issue of the platforms is

1 something that we're thinking to get a lot
2 more uniformity. When we moved last spring
3 from being I guess normal, if you want to use
4 the term, and we had to turn 50,000 courses
5 to distance-learning education, obviously
6 there was a lot of mismatch, because we were
7 just in an emergency mode trying to
8 transition, protect the semester, and get
9 everybody going.

10 By our investment in the professional
11 development of our faculty, we have tried to
12 standardize the numbers of platforms that our
13 students use, because I know that it's an
14 issue. I have a first-year freshman at home
15 learning online who's equally complaining
16 about the fact that one teacher uses this and
17 the other uses a different thing. So we're
18 working through that so we can have the
19 maximum level of flexibility for the faculty
20 to use the tools they think are the best to
21 teach, but to make that experience more even
22 for our students.

23 Did I miss any other of your
24 questions?

1 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: No, but I have
2 one follow-up. In terms of the enrollment
3 numbers, some of it is new students and some
4 of it might be retention. Do you have that
5 separated?

6 And do you have students who just
7 couldn't relate to the online learning and
8 have taken a gap year? Do you have a sense
9 of whether they are going to come back,
10 either for the semester or hopefully
11 targeting the fall?

12 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So, you
13 know, I can send you sort of the breakdown of
14 our numbers.

15 Most of -- like I said, the enrollment
16 at the four-year schools has been fairly
17 flat, maybe with a little increase in some of
18 the campuses. Most of that has been new
19 students. And there's been an increase on
20 the graduate programs, that has been the one
21 sector that has showed an increase. And it's
22 been the community colleges and the
23 comprehensives where we've lost some of the
24 students, and I can give you the breakdown in

1 terms of new students and transfers.

2 We have been working very hard with
3 the students who we feel, either because of
4 not adapting well to distance learning or
5 other issues that they might have faced due
6 to COVID, might have been losing academic
7 momentum. So we -- that was part of giving
8 them flexibility with the credit/no credit
9 policy. Right? Pushing down the date to
10 withdraw from a course, to give them the
11 maximum level of flexibility.

12 And our campuses have kept in touch
13 with those students to either try to bring
14 them back in the summer, and explore other
15 alternatives of sort of support while we
16 continue on this mostly online mode for the
17 fall.

18 So there's been a lot of attention to
19 the students that maybe have not adapted well
20 because of that, and we're hoping that, you
21 know, that in the fall we'll have a lot more
22 sort of face-to-face activity or a better mix
23 of hybrid courses that have some face-to-face
24 and online, and we're able to recuperate

1 those students.

2 But I can give you some of the
3 breakdowns --

4 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Great. Thank
5 you, Chancellor.

6 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: -- for
7 enrollment.

8 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you very
9 much.

10 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

11 Now we go to the Senate.

12 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

13 Senator Toby Stavisky, 10 minutes.

14 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

15 Chancellor, first let me thank you for
16 the really quality appointments that you made
17 at the Queens institutions, the community
18 colleges and Queens College. And
19 Queensborough is also in my district, as well
20 as Queens College. And I've met with all of
21 the new presidents, and I think those were
22 terrific appointments.

23 I listened to your testimony, and you
24 were appreciative of the fact that there were

1 many programs, opportunity programs, that
2 were not cut. But ASAP is one that was cut
3 to the tune of about \$2.5 million.

4 How are you going to -- hopefully the
5 Legislature, you know, will add it on,
6 depending upon what the table amount is at
7 final budget discussions. But what effect
8 will that loss have on student programs?
9 Because that's a really successful program.

10 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So again,
11 thank you, Senator Stavisky, for that. And
12 I'm happy that you're pleased with
13 Dr. Mangino at Queensborough and Dr. Wu at
14 Queens. Dr. Wu has an easier job at Queens
15 because the previous president was not as
16 good.

17 (Laughter.)

18 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: But I'm
19 delighted that you have them with you.

20 And also, thank you for your support
21 on behalf of the 9,182 CUNY students that you
22 have in your district.

23 So ASAP is very important to us. I
24 mean, it has been -- it is a national model

1 now. Seven states replicate the work that
2 we've been doing at ASAP. The Kennedy School
3 gave us an award on innovation last year
4 because of the results that ASAP has
5 provided.

6 So we hope that we can get that
7 funding back at the state level. The ASAP
8 program has also been targeted for cuts at
9 the city level, and we'll be trying to have
10 conversations to restore those, because they
11 target one of our most successful programs
12 that has an impact on enrollment. A lot of
13 the students are attracted for the benefits
14 that the ASAP provides and the effectiveness
15 of ASAP -- so we lose enrollment.

16 So it's a cut that cuts a program and
17 cuts our enrollment base. It hits us twice.
18 And then it hits us a third time when that
19 student, right, that is going to finish at a
20 faster rate than others, does not transfer to
21 a four-year school. Right? So for us ASAP
22 is an investment in student success, but it's
23 also a key investment in our overall sort of
24 enrollment trends in the system. So thank

1 you for bringing that up to our attention.

2 SENATOR STAVISKY: Yes. And in fact
3 we're going to be paying more in state income
4 tax when they -- after they graduate and they
5 have a better-paying job, so it's a hit on
6 everybody.

7 Let me go to one area that hasn't been
8 discussed, and that is the campus safety
9 issue in terms of reopening. To me, that's
10 the most important aspect, to keep everybody
11 safe -- students, faculty, anybody who works
12 at any of the campuses.

13 What have you been doing in terms of
14 meeting with all of the stakeholders, talking
15 to them, testing -- which I think is really
16 the key to a successful academic year, where
17 people are tested repeatedly, inspections are
18 made by qualified, licensed industrial
19 experts. Because some of those buildings are
20 really old. I went to Hunter and Queens,
21 both of them for graduate school. Those
22 buildings are still standing, and this was
23 quite a while ago.

24 So how are the reopening plans going?

1 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So thank
2 you for your question. And obviously for us,
3 safety -- actually, part of my testimony that
4 I didn't get to read addresses some of those
5 points, so thank you for bringing that point.

6 Safety has been our key concern.
7 That's why we decided to have a semester that
8 was mostly online. Our students come from
9 different parts of the city, they require --
10 our students, our faculty and staff come from
11 different parts of the city and require
12 public transportation to be moving. So we
13 felt that as long as the numbers were high
14 and there was a lot of -- the possibility of,
15 you know, contagiousness, that we wanted to
16 protect our faculty, students and staff.

17 And actually if you look at the
18 numbers that we've had, the numbers of cases
19 for our community have been quite low and
20 very low instances of something happening on
21 the campus because of the measures that we
22 have taken.

23 We've put in -- and I directed my team
24 to do this -- we put in about 17 million of

1 the critical maintenance capital funds
2 directly into some of those old buildings
3 that you're mentioning so that in the fall
4 we're in the best possible conditions to
5 reopen. I mean, we still don't know exactly
6 how the state of public health will be at
7 that time, but we agree with you that
8 additional testing, the social distancing,
9 the masks -- all those things are going to be
10 part of the menu for our successful reopening
11 in the fall.

12 We've also -- all our campuses have
13 very direct reopening plans that were created
14 in consultation with faculty, staff, labor,
15 students, other stakeholders. And they very
16 clearly say if you are at 25 percent
17 capacity, if you want to move to 50, here's a
18 checklist of the things that you need to do.
19 And all this is based on the best guidance
20 from the state and the city.

21 So we're going to be following those
22 reopening plans, which is our map to a safe
23 recovery. We're working with our campuses to
24 get ready for different scenarios in the

1 fall. We hope that with the vaccines, with
2 new developments in cheaper, faster testing,
3 we can provide a safer environment in the
4 fall.

5 I think that you're aware that we
6 created a partnership with the Health +
7 Hospitals of the City of New York and our
8 faculty, students and staff have priority
9 testing in all those facilities. We've also
10 began to do testing in our dorms. We do not
11 have the large dorm -- we have about
12 850 students in our dorms. But we began
13 doing testing of those students periodically
14 to sort of keep that contained.

15 So all those strategies will continue
16 to -- and anything that we learn in the
17 process we'll take to have a safe environment
18 in the fall, because we're not going to let
19 anyone be in facilities that do not have the
20 proper social distance, that do not have the
21 required health that we want for all our
22 stakeholders. And we take that very, very
23 seriously.

24 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

1 I see there are only two minutes left,
2 but I think -- the CARES Act, is there any
3 money left that hasn't been spent? I know
4 it's split between the students and the
5 institutions in the university. Does the
6 money go to the CUNY or to the -- {mic
7 dropout}.

8 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So I
9 couldn't hear you right, but I thought the
10 question was about the CARES Act and where
11 the money went or is going.

12 So \$118 million of the money that was
13 directly going to the students, we sent that
14 out right away in May, prioritizing the
15 students that had the largest need, and
16 student parents. And about -- the average
17 amount that each student got was about 600.
18 And every CUNY student that was eligible
19 according to the CARES Act got some portion
20 of the money. We used the Chancellor's Fund
21 to support undocumented and international
22 students that unfortunately were not included
23 in the CARES Act.

24 Of the money going to the campuses,

1 that money goes to the campuses. There's no
2 money there that is allocated towards the
3 central office. Of that money going to the
4 campuses, we took 5 million and we invested
5 that in support programs directly going to
6 mental health support.

7 Some money went to purchase systemwide
8 licenses -- they'd be cheaper, right, and we
9 get better terms -- that provide all kinds of
10 tele-mental health support to the students.
11 And then we gave money to the campuses and we
12 said, this part of the money has to go to
13 hiring more counselors, hiring more licenses,
14 and 41 million was given to the campuses and
15 the rest of the money is going to be
16 allocated in the budget for this spring
17 semester.

18 SENATOR STAVISKY: I think I lost my
19 video. But what I'm asking also is how much
20 money is left.

21 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: It will be
22 -- of the one allocated for the spring? It
23 would be 118 minus 41.

24 SENATOR STAVISKY: Okay. And the

1 video's back. Thank you.

2 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Thank you.

3 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

4 Assembly.

5 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to

6 Assemblywoman Hyndman, three minutes.

7 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: Thank you very

8 much. Chair Weinstein, my question was

9 asked.

10 I would just like to say we're

11 really -- it's always good to see you,

12 Chancellor, and your staff.

13 It is -- we're really excited in

14 Southeast Queens with the prospect of the

15 Queensborough FC coming, Football Club. We

16 have a huge Caribbean population in Southeast

17 Queens, and a growing African population. So

18 if you could -- you know, this is just a plug

19 to make sure that we get everything we need.

20 I heard progress was made and an announcement

21 will be forthcoming. I'm not going to say

22 what it is. But we're really excited that

23 it's coming.

24 And my question was already asked, so

1 that's all. Thank you, Chair Weinstein.

2 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

3 Okay, we're going to go to the Senate, then.

4 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you very
5 much --

6 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Can I give
7 a shout-out to the 3,816 CUNY students that
8 live in the district of Assemblywoman
9 Hyndman?

10 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: I guess you can.

11 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: And you did.
12 And we appreciate it.

13 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay, I just want
14 to double-check. Does our ranker, Senator
15 Boyle, have any questions? I don't see him
16 with his hand up, I just didn't want to jump
17 over him.

18 So the next Senator online is Senator
19 Robert Jackson, three minutes.

20 SENATOR JACKSON: Well, thank you --
21 let's see. Thank you, Chancellor and your
22 staff, for being here. I only have three
23 minutes, though, if you can try to be as
24 succinct as possible in answering.

1 So the -- first of all, I understand
2 that you've hired back about a thousand
3 adjunct professors, but there are 2,000 that
4 still have not been hired back and do not
5 have, when they were let go, health insurance
6 and all of the things that employees are
7 entitled to.

8 And so is there -- what's the game
9 plan on bringing them back? Is it all about
10 money? And if so, how much do you need?

11 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So the --
12 thank you for your question, Senator Jackson.
13 And again, on behalf of 6,709 CUNY students
14 in your district, thank you for your support.

15 We hired a number of adjuncts back.
16 And we actually raised some money from the
17 Mellon Foundation to be able to hire adjuncts
18 back, that's how important it is to us to try
19 to get as many of those adjuncts back to us.

20 Enrollment is an issue, so it's not
21 just money. If you have less students
22 attending, particularly at the community
23 college, it's going to have an impact on the
24 number of sessions that you have. And that

1 is something that varies from year to year,
2 so it's not necessarily just exactly about
3 the funding.

4 We prioritized, in an agreement that
5 we had with the PSC, the -- some of the
6 adjuncts that if not receiving one or two
7 courses will be affected with healthcare, and
8 we were able to bring about 80 percent of
9 those.

10 So again, that's something that
11 they're vital members of our community and we
12 hope to have a fiscal environment and an
13 enrollment environment that allows us to
14 provide them opportunities and also hopefully
15 the opportunity to some of them to be ones
16 who are on the path to be full professors,
17 right -- because many of those adjuncts also
18 just teach a class or two --

19 SENATOR JACKSON: I'm sorry,
20 Chancellor -- Chancellor --

21 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: -- so
22 getting a full-time job.

23 SENATOR JACKSON: I appreciate the
24 full response, but I only have a minute. So

1 I've got two more quick questions.

2 Can you tell me what is the faculty to
3 student ratio at this point in time? That's
4 one. And how are we going to deal with the
5 5 percent proposed cut? And I hope that it's
6 not a proposed cut, I hope that we increase
7 the amount of money for fiscal '21-'22.

8 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So the
9 faculty-student ratio is about 22 students
10 per section. It's between 21 and 22 for the
11 past two years, so it's fairly stable.

12 And again, in terms of navigating the
13 5 percent, we've taken a number of measures.
14 We had a hiring freeze that has allowed us to
15 sort of, you know, contain some of the
16 personnel costs, that we began this year some
17 efficiencies that we're targeting across the
18 systems to avoid redundancies that we hope
19 that --

20 SENATOR JACKSON: Chancellor, my
21 apologies. I got five seconds, I got two
22 questions that I quickly want to ask you.
23 And that is about the Murphy Institute, CUNY
24 School of Labor and Urban Studies, they're

1 increasing in their numbers, and my
2 understanding is that there's a commitment to
3 expand, and that has not been done to meet
4 the needs.

5 And then finally -- I'm sorry, Madam
6 Chairs, I just have to get this one in -- I
7 understand that PSC, the Professional Staff
8 Congress, has asked to be involved in
9 negotiations about reopening, and that has
10 not -- that request has been refused.

11 So I would like to have an answer in
12 writing to those. But if you can just answer
13 those quickly, I would appreciate it. And
14 thank you, Madam Chairs, for indulging me.

15 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: You're indulged,
16 but you're done.

17 SENATOR JACKSON: I know.

18 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay.

19 SENATOR JACKSON: Chancellor?

20 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Do you
21 want me -- do you want me to answer them --

22 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Yes, if you can
23 quickly answer.

24 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So the PSC

1 has been involved in conversations of
2 reopening two ways. One, in each campus, as
3 each campus's reopening plan, they consulted
4 with faculty, staff, students, labor in the
5 case. So that's one layer of consultation.
6 The PSC also has two quarterly meetings, two
7 meetings a semester with the senior
8 management, and we've been discussing
9 reopening plans and safety in those meetings
10 too. So they've had a forum there, aside
11 from the, you know, more indirect contact.

12 The first question was?

13 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: No, we're not
14 going back. You're going to be able to
15 answer him offline.

16 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Oh,
17 Murphy, committed to the Murphy Institute.
18 And we actually gave them 12 percent more
19 space to meet their needs in the past year.

20 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you,
21 Chancellor.

22 Assembly -- we apologize for the time.

23 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to
24 Assemblywoman Bichotte Hermelyn.

1 Rodneyse, are you there?

2 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BICHOTTE HERMELYN: Yes,

3 I am. Thank you. Thank you so much.

4 Chancellor, so good to see you. How

5 are you?

6 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Good to

7 see you too.

8 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BICHOTTE HERMELYN:

9 Thank you for being here.

10 I have two short questions. One,

11 wanted to know how responsive is CUNY to

12 students who, while remote learning, still

13 have complaints regarding sexual harassment?

14 You know, statistics show that there's an

15 increase in domestic violence since the

16 beginning of the COVID-19, and wanted to know

17 how responsive is CUNY to that. That's my

18 first question.

19 And my second question is, very happy

20 to hear about the construction, 30 percent

21 MWBEs is being dedicated to the \$100 million

22 construction initiative. I wanted to know,

23 you know, what is the spend percentage? Is

24 it also 30 percent, or is 30 percent just a

1 goal right now?

2 Those are my two questions.

3 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Yes. So
4 let me begin with the last one.

5 We hit the -- we hit 31 percent this
6 year. The state goal is 30. So we've been
7 increasing those numbers every year. It's
8 one of the -- it's a big priority for our
9 Board of Trustees. I have to say that I have
10 a very -- you know, Chairman Thompson and the
11 entire board is very, very committed to this
12 goal. You have some champions there --
13 Sandra Wilkin, Trustee Ferrer, many people
14 have fought for this historically -- Una
15 Clarke -- and my team is committed to that
16 too.

17 We changed some procurement rules to
18 provide additional flexibility last year, so
19 keep encouraging that. We added parts of our
20 capital funding that were not included in the
21 MWBE programming, also to expand that pie.

22 We're also looking forward to working
23 with our small business campus centers that
24 we have in the campuses to also be able to be

1 more supportive of our women- and
2 minority-owned business. So that's a big,
3 big goal of ours.

4 And again, any additional feedback and
5 thoughts from you and the members of the
6 Assembly and the Senate on this front will be
7 gladly received, because it is an important
8 commitment on our part.

9 The sexual harassment investigations
10 and claims continue to be processed in our
11 campuses. Now it's mostly done virtually, as
12 most of our student services are done
13 virtually, to avoid our students and faculty
14 potentially getting exposed to the virus.

15 If you have particular concerns about
16 some of the campuses, please let me know,
17 because these things are very, very important
18 to us. We want to make sure that no matter
19 the environment, virtual or real, we take
20 those things into account.

21 So if you have any signs that things
22 are not being done well, please let me know
23 so that we can correct them.

24 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BICHOTTE HERMELYN:

1 Thank you. Thank you so much, Chancellor.

2 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

3 We go to the Senate now.

4 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

5 Senator Diane Savino.

6 SENATOR SAVINO: Thank you,

7 Senator Krueger.

8 Good to see you, Chancellor.

9 So I'm going to pick up where Senator
10 Jackson left off with respect to the School
11 of Labor and Urban Studies. It used to be
12 the Murphy Institute.

13 But first I want to thank you,
14 Chancellor, for your commitment to it. It is
15 the culmination of more than a decade of us
16 trying to get CUNY to create it as a
17 separate, self-standing school.

18 And it has shown tremendous growth.
19 Enrollment is up 12 percent during the
20 pandemic. I know you've hired a lot of new
21 faculty and staff. But they're kind of stuck
22 right now, because they need space. So I
23 have just a few questions, and hopefully you
24 can answer them.

1 Since we know that in-person classes
2 are likely to start up again this fall, you
3 were recently in negotiations with a landlord
4 to increase capacity. Will you begin to
5 resume those negotiations?

6 I know that many of the unions have
7 signed contracts to enroll new students --
8 DC 37 just signed an MOU to enroll and pay
9 for 100 new students. TWU Local 100 is
10 signing a new contract, 1199 also. And
11 you're also attracting students that are not
12 union-affiliated.

13 So the question is, where are you
14 going to put them? The library has been
15 closed for the past five years, and students
16 don't have a library. So you're bursting at
17 the seams at the School of Labor and Urban
18 Studies. And what can you do to make sure
19 that students have a place to actually attend
20 and learn?

21 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So thank
22 you for your question and for your support of
23 the Murphy Institute. And not to leave
24 anybody out or behind, you know, greetings

1 from the 10,475 CUNY students that are in
2 your district. And also thank you for your
3 support of the Calandra Institute, which I
4 know is very dear to your heart also.

5 We began and we actually got the
6 School of Labor additional space. They
7 increased their space about by about
8 12 percent. So we came in, we knew that they
9 had their spacing, so we took care of that.
10 They need additional space, and we are trying
11 to negotiate that with the landlord. A lot
12 of real estate conversations have been sort
13 of affected by COVID, so that has not been
14 particularly helpful.

15 We've also been in conversations with
16 the dean to see if we can maximize space.
17 Many of the courses provided, for example, in
18 the School of Labor Studies occur in the
19 evening. We have some campuses that most of
20 the classes happen during the day and are
21 nearby, and we're trying to see if we can
22 more effectively use the space.

23 Long term, right, we're also thinking
24 about where the school could be housed.

1 Right? There's a couple of other
2 possibilities in the Manhattan area we're
3 looking at, and that might be a possibility
4 to meet all their needs and maybe also create
5 some shared space. For example, if they're
6 with another combined twin facility, things
7 like the library could be a joint facility
8 that would be better for the students there
9 and for everybody around.

10 So we're trying to work very hard to
11 meet their needs. And thank you for bringing
12 that to my attention.

13 SENATOR SAVINO: Well, whatever we can
14 do to help. You know, it's been a commitment
15 of the Legislature for years now, and we're
16 happy that it's finally there. Now we need
17 to make sure the money is there as well.

18 Thank you.

19 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Thank you.

20 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

21 Assembly.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to
23 Assemblyman Epstein, three minutes.

24 Harvey?

1 Let's go instead to Assemblywoman --

2 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: I got my mike,
3 but not my camera.

4 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Okay, Harvey,
5 please go ahead.

6 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Yeah, if they
7 can get my camera, I'll do it.

8 Hi, Chancellor. Oh, there you go.

9 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Good to
10 see you.

11 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Now you see me.
12 There you go. How are you? Thank you for
13 being here.

14 Do you support increased funding for
15 CUNY, Chancellor?

16 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Do I
17 support --

18 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Increased
19 funding for CUNY.

20 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: All the
21 resources that can help our students succeed,
22 we're always behind.

23 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: So you don't
24 support cuts in childcare or telehealth, is

1 that right?

2 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: We've been
3 increasing telehealth support for the
4 students with money from the CARES Act.

5 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: So you want more
6 money, right, Chancellor?

7 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: And
8 actually our request talks about additional
9 mental health support too.

10 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Great. And
11 childcare support for students who need
12 childcare?

13 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Very
14 important.

15 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Very important.
16 Students with disabilities who need more
17 support, they should get more funding, right,
18 Chancellor?

19 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Actually
20 it's -- we're investing some money from the
21 Chancellor's Emergency Fund to provide
22 support for those students, so -- and I know
23 they're very dear to our heart and to your
24 heart too.

1 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Great. And then
2 we don't want cuts in -- we don't want to
3 increase the TAP gap, right, Chancellor? We
4 don't want more TAP gap problems, right?

5 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Again,
6 this is the -- the -- we need the resources
7 that are available to us to be able to
8 provide the best services to the students.

9 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Great. So
10 that's what we want. We want more revenue to
11 make CUNY as affordable as possible so people
12 like me and my father and our kids can go to
13 affordable schools for generations to come,
14 right? Fabulous. I'm glad we agree. I
15 really appreciate it.

16 I'm wondering, just on the cuts that
17 we're seeing, you know, how do you think we
18 can avoid it? Is it just raising additional
19 revenue to avoid those cuts?

20 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So, I
21 mean, you and I have talked about this. So I
22 see my responsibility as coming and sharing
23 with all of you the things that we're doing,
24 the things that we need, the great return on

1 investment that the state and city gets from
2 supporting CUNY. The state and the city have
3 been very generous with that support.

4 How the revenue gets allocated is
5 something that is part of the budget process,
6 and it's really a purview of the legislators
7 and the Executive to determine.

8 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you. And
9 I appreciate you standing up for CUNY every
10 single day. It was great to see you at the
11 Baruch opening that we had, I think last
12 week.

13 I want to encourage you to look to us
14 for support for CUNY, because you want to
15 continue to make CUNY strong. We know your
16 an ally in that fight. And the hope is when
17 these issues come up, that you will stand
18 with us to ensure that there's more funding
19 in capital and operation money for CUNY,
20 because that's what we all need to make CUNY
21 successful.

22 I really appreciate your leadership
23 and look forward to collaborating to make
24 CUNY stronger every single day.

1 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Same here.
2 And always, thank you for your feedback.
3 Some of your feedback on the food pantry
4 policy, we put it into effect. So we listen.
5 Thank you so much for the support.

6 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you.
7 Thank you, Madam Chair.

8 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.
9 Go to the Senate now.

10 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.
11 Senator Andrew Gounardes, three
12 minutes.

13 SENATOR GOUNARDES: Great. Thank you,
14 Senator Krueger.

15 Hi, Chancellor. How are you? Good to
16 see you.

17 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Good to
18 see you.

19 SENATOR GOUNARDES: So -- and I want
20 to just thank Harvey, because he kind of --
21 you know, he has the spirit of all the
22 questions that I wanted to be asking. So
23 thanks for setting the stage there, Harvey.

24 Chancellor, can you give us an

1 update -- you know, I know at one point the
2 state had withheld funding throughout the
3 past year for the CUNY system. Can you give
4 us an update as to where that funding
5 currently is? I think it was like
6 20 percent. What's the status of that
7 funding?

8 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So the --
9 thank you for your question.

10 And again, greetings from 10,575 CUNY
11 students who are in your district. And thank
12 you for being such a great ally of the system
13 and our students.

14 The state, with the uncertainty that
15 was being faced, withheld temporarily
16 20 percent of the state appropriations and
17 the money that came from the state for TAP
18 and student support services. That money is
19 being restored and -- with the -- for the
20 current fiscal year.

21 SENATOR GOUNARDES: And that will all
22 be restored, all 20 percent? Or will there
23 still be a portion withheld, to your
24 knowledge?

1 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So let me
2 turn to Matt, because I -- I don't know if
3 the 5 percent applies to this year or next
4 year. Can I turn to Matt Sapienza just for a
5 lifesaver?

6 SENATOR GOUNARDES: Phone a friend,
7 there you go.

8 CUNY CFO SAPIENZA: Hi,
9 Senator Gounardes. And good afternoon,
10 everyone.

11 So the 20 percent withholding has been
12 removed, as the chancellor says, and has been
13 replaced with a 5 percent reductions in
14 current fiscal year, fiscal year '21, and
15 that 5 percent reduction continues into next
16 year, into fiscal '22.

17 SENATOR GOUNARDES: Got it. So we're
18 looking at a 5 percent reduction this year
19 and a 5 percent reduction next year.

20 Can you tell us, either Chancellor or
21 Matt, what percent funding decrease has CUNY
22 experienced over the last, I don't know, five
23 years in state operating support?

24 CUNY CFO SAPIENZA: State operating

1 support has actually -- overall, has gone up
2 over the last five years. I don't have the
3 actual number, but we can certainly get that
4 to you.

5 A lot of our mandatory needs have been
6 historically funded over the years -- fringe
7 benefit costs and the like. So overall, it's
8 gone up. I don't have the number or the
9 percents with me, but certainly a knowable
10 number that we can get to you very quickly.

11 SENATOR GOUNARDES: So you're saying
12 that state spending on the university has
13 actually increased overall and that the
14 state's share of support for the system has
15 increased, not decreased, correct?

16 CUNY CFO SAPIENZA: Overall state
17 support has gone up, correct.

18 SENATOR GOUNARDES: Okay, thank you.

19 And how are the colleges able to -- or
20 let's say the 15 percent that's going to come
21 back to them now, will that be the entire
22 amount that was withheld, or will that be
23 prorated for the remainder of the year to
24 them? In other words, is everyone getting a

1 lump sum of payment back, or is the system
2 going to kind of get, on a prorated basis,
3 whatever is left to spend for this year?
4 Obviously it's going to take time and
5 whatever --

6 CUNY CFO SAPIENZA: Yeah, we are going
7 to be presenting to our Board of Trustees
8 Fiscal Committee at their next meeting on
9 March 1st the budget for each college for the
10 rest of the year. And so yes, that 5 percent
11 cut will have to be proportioned to each
12 college.

13 We have other challenges as well. And
14 the chancellor mentioned earlier we have city
15 budget reductions too that our community
16 colleges are facing.

17 But yes, the 5 percent will be
18 prorated against every college's budget, and
19 we'll be presenting that at the March 1st
20 meeting of the board fiscal committee.

21 SENATOR GOUNARDES: Thank you. I'll
22 just close by saying I think it's crazy that
23 this -- and this is not a condemnation of you
24 all, but it's crazy that in, you know, one of

1 the world's largest urban public
2 universities, we're left to kind of figure
3 out on a month-by-month basis what the
4 budget's going to be like with a 5 percent
5 cut this year and next year. And it is
6 completely absurd and something that I'm
7 very, very concerned about. That's not your
8 fault --

9 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

10 SENATOR GOUNARDES: -- it's other
11 people's faults, but I want that on the
12 record.

13 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: You're over time,
14 so I'm cutting you off. Thank you, Senator.

15 SENATOR GOUNARDES: Go for it.

16 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Assembly.

17 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to
18 Assemblywoman Forrest.

19 ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORREST: Thank you so
20 much, Chancellor Matos, for being here.
21 Chancellor Matos, you were at CUNY Queens.
22 I'm a graduate of both City Tech and the
23 School of Professional Studies. So I love
24 CUNY.

1 And you are the steward of an
2 education system that serves 500,000. And as
3 you're a steward, I'm sure you know it is
4 your duty to propose a budget that serves
5 that 500,000 people, right? So my question
6 to you, the 30,000 members of the
7 Professional Staff Congress were -- they were
8 owed a contractual 2 percent pay increase in
9 November 2020. We have not seen that in the
10 budget, and I don't see it anywhere else.
11 How do we address this? Because it seems
12 like, you know, the system is now in
13 violation of the union contract and the law
14 by delaying contractually negotiated raises.

15 That's one question. Do you want me
16 to wait for your answer or ask the other
17 ones?

18 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: However
19 you wish.

20 ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORREST: All right, go
21 ahead, answer the question.

22 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Okay,
23 thank you. Again, thank you for your
24 support, and great to have a CUNY twofer with

1 us. And greetings also from the 2,255
2 CUNY students that are in your district.

3 And so this was a very, very difficult
4 fiscal year. And this was a year also in
5 which we're dealing with a lot of
6 unprecedented changes coming our way -- the
7 budget scenario at the state city and federal
8 level; enrollment issues that also affect our
9 tuition. So we had to take a number of
10 decisions that -- to protect the overall
11 university. And to do that, members of the
12 senior management took a five-day furlough to
13 do that. We created a Vacancy Review Board
14 to provide good use of our hires and
15 personnel in a way that was, you know,
16 consistent with fiscally trying times that we
17 are facing.

18 So unfortunately, the -- and, you
19 know, that's a contract that I signed when I
20 started as chancellor, my first couple of
21 months, because it is so important. But in a
22 way that is consistent with the SUNY system
23 and the state employees, we decided to delay
24 that. We hope to be able to provide that

1 back when we have more budget certainty. And
2 it's a priority for us.

3 ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORREST: Yes. But then
4 we have \$455 million in federal funds. Do
5 you have no control over where that goes in
6 terms of class sizes, keeping your
7 professional staff?

8 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So the
9 money comes with very specific spending
10 categories. It is not free money that we get
11 to spend on anything that we want. The
12 CARES Act, for example, was very specific in
13 paying for things that were associated with
14 costs for the pandemic, that we had about
15 \$68 million in added costs, and to be able to
16 replace things associated with distance
17 learning. So some of those funds do not have
18 the flexibility that some folks think that
19 they do.

20 We again, we're going to use every
21 flexibility to support the students, to
22 support the mission. So that's going to be
23 more classroom sections, that's going to be
24 more advisors, more mental health, all the

1 things that the students need -- to the
2 extent that the federal funding allows us to.

3 ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORREST: Thank you.

4 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Thank you.

5 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

6 We go to the Senate now.

7 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

8 Senator John Liu.

9 SENATOR LIU: Thank you, Madam Chair.

10 Felo, what's my number?

11 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Great to
12 see you. 9,443.

13 SENATOR LIU: Thank you. I want to
14 thank you, Chancellor, for the great
15 appointment of Frank Wu to Queens College. I
16 do not appreciate you casting aspersions on
17 his predecessor, former Queens College
18 President Felix Matos Rodriguez. He was a
19 great Queens College president also.

20 As Senator Savino and Senator Jackson
21 already mentioned -- and I will throw my
22 voice into it as well -- the School of Labor
23 and Urban Studies is a very important part of
24 CUNY. I did have the pleasure of teaching

1 there a few years ago and saw firsthand the
2 contributions that it makes to our city. So
3 please uphold the commitment that you've
4 already articulated. I know you've already
5 increased the space that they have available,
6 but they need more. And if we can get those
7 lease negotiations back on track that were
8 thrown off by COVID, but now it looks like at
9 some point students will return, so we need
10 that space for the School of Labor and Urban
11 Studies. All right?

12 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ:

13 {Inaudible.}.

14 SENATOR LIU: Maybe you can have my
15 old friend Hector Battista work on that
16 project, because he'll definitely get things
17 done. And I call him old because I've known
18 him since we were young men.

19 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: And he's
20 been -- the guiding force in getting that
21 increase is Hector and his team. So it's a
22 commitment. And I didn't know -- I knew that
23 you had taught at Baruch and Queens, but I
24 didn't know you had taught there. So --

1 SENATOR LIU: Yes. And I used to be
2 one of those adjunct professors that
3 Senator Jackson mentioned.

4 We do need to get them back, because
5 they -- the classes that they teach are vital
6 to CUNY students in providing them the
7 options and array of coursework.

8 Let me get to my main question today,
9 which is I know every year we do this,
10 whether with you or your predecessors, and
11 it's always about the budget shortfalls and
12 the challenges that CUNY has balancing the
13 budgets. And even in today's discussion
14 that's been the main focus.

15 My question for you is, we've been
16 faced with years and years of austerity.
17 CUNY has faced a lot of the brunt of that
18 austerity. Beyond just trying to figure out
19 how you're going to do more with less, what
20 is the vision? At some point, you know, I'm
21 looking to you and the trustees to articulate
22 a broad, long-term vision for CUNY. That
23 broad, long-term vision has to take us out of
24 austerity, has to start reducing the amount

1 of the costs that are borne by tuition --
2 preferably, one day, down to zero, when we
3 can resume free tuition for CUNY students
4 once again.

5 And a great expansion of the offerings
6 that CUNY has to offer. This has happened in
7 previous recessionary periods, where new CUNY
8 campuses were actually built, where offerings
9 were greatly expanded to take advantage of
10 the greater demand for CUNY services.

11 So what's the vision for that, apart
12 from, you know, having to deal with these
13 budget crises all the time? And my
14 point-blank question is, if you had more
15 money, if you had like a few billion dollars
16 more -- because we're trying to raise revenue
17 to get us out of this austerity -- what would
18 you do with that? What would CUNY do with,
19 say, \$4 billion more each year?

20 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So from
21 your lips to God's ears, right?

22 And thank you, thank you for the
23 questions. A couple of things, right? We
24 have focused this budget request at a very

1 difficult time on things that are key to our
2 mission, which are COVID response and
3 recovery, right? To make sure that everybody
4 can come back --

5 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Chancellor, if
6 you could just be kind of concise. We've
7 gone over more than a minute.

8 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So let me
9 then send him a vision independently.

10 But again, you know, for us -- and we
11 always will provide a budget with the context
12 of where we are. We are at a difficult
13 budget time. We take that into account in
14 the budget request. If we are in a scenario
15 where there's additional dollars, then we'll
16 make a budget request that is consistent with
17 that. If the federal government and Biden
18 gets the things that he's hoping for, that
19 will change things too. And then we'll adapt
20 the request to that.

21 But happy to take that -- I mean, I
22 don't have time, but to take your question
23 and talk in private.

24 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Any follow-up

1 questions -- follow-up answers to questions,
2 please also send to the respective chairs so
3 that we can circulate with all of the
4 members. I'm sure they'll be curious.

5 Now we go to Assemblyman Pichardo,
6 three minutes.

7 Victor, you need to unmute yourself,
8 please. Thank you.

9 ASSEMBLYMAN PICHARDO: It's only taken
10 me a year to figure this out, Madam
11 Chairwoman, I apologize.

12 So Felo, nice to see you. To my
13 colleagues at CUCF, it's nice to see many of
14 you here. I'll be brief because time is
15 short.

16 A couple of things I wanted to ask.
17 First of all, regarding opportunity programs
18 distributed by the Office of Special
19 Programs, I kind of want to have a sense of
20 what really is the breakdown in terms of
21 dollars. Is it -- is most of the majority of
22 the money going towards students? Is it to
23 cover overhead? What's sort of the breakdown
24 there, Mr. Chancellor?

1 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So I don't
2 have -- great to see you, Assemblyman
3 Pichardo. And not to leave your constituents
4 behind, you know, greetings also from 3,887
5 CUNY students that live in your district.

6 And I don't have a breakdown of the --
7 how the different budget categories are used
8 in the opportunity programs. We can get
9 those to your office both from SEEK and the
10 College Discovery.

11 But I mean, in general, based on
12 having been on the campuses, they pay for
13 faculty to teach specialized courses to the
14 students, they pay for advisors for the
15 students, they provide some stipends --
16 sometimes the students serve as mentors to
17 other SEEK students -- and then for some
18 other programmatic needs. But I can get you
19 the precise breakdown too.

20 ASSEMBLYMAN PICHARDO: I would
21 appreciate that, Chancellor.

22 And two more questions, sir. I
23 mentioned CUCF. Obviously I represent the
24 campus of Bronx Community College in my

1 district. We've been trying to work on
2 trying to upgrade the ventilation systems and
3 the air-conditioning systems. Is there money
4 in your proposal right now to help deal with
5 that specific issue on campus for Bronx
6 Community College?

7 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So thank
8 you for that question, because one of the
9 parts in my oral testimony that I didn't get
10 to is a request on capital dollars. And we
11 have put the request for this year really
12 focusing on those key areas that are
13 important all the time, but are particularly
14 important as we get ready to move to the new
15 normal in the fall and other things
16 associated with COVID.

17 So the budget request that we have
18 right now accentuates funding for those kinds
19 of repairs all across the system. And
20 obviously a campus like Bronx Community,
21 because of its size and its age, you know,
22 has been prioritized and will continue to be
23 prioritized. So that's a key part of what
24 we're asking in this budget request. So

1 thank you for allowing me to make that
2 comment to the panel today.

3 ASSEMBLYMAN PICHARDO: And one last
4 thing before I close, as my time runs short.
5 I've been hearing some push-back from some of
6 the CUNY students regarding class sizes,
7 especially around remote learning. Some
8 classes have been sort of canceled a week
9 before if they have 20 or less. It's been
10 shown that there's a benefit to doing classes
11 with smaller class sizes. If you can answer
12 that, and I'll leave it at that.

13 And Mr. Chancellor, again, my
14 condolences to you and your family on your
15 recent loss as well, sir.

16 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: {In
17 Spanish} Victor, thank you so much for that.
18 And actually I'm coming live from my mother's
19 house, right, because we're still dealing
20 with that.

21 To your question about class size, as
22 I mentioned before, the data that we have
23 systemwide doesn't show that the class sizes
24 have sort of grown. They're about 22, and

1 they used to be -- they've been between 22
2 and 21 for the past five, six years.

3 That doesn't mean that there might not
4 be specific examples in a campus here or
5 there, but I don't think there's a widespread
6 issue with that.

7 And actually, at the community
8 colleges, to your case in the Bronx, the
9 number of classes between one and 10 students
10 has actually increased. So again, we are
11 trying to be responsive to the student needs,
12 so the sections that they need available for
13 them, to be good stewards, right, in the
14 sense of maximizing the sections that we
15 have.

16 But I -- I -- I -- there might be some
17 specific examples here and there. Right?
18 I'm sure that in a big system there is. But
19 I think that that idea of a widespread issue
20 with class size is -- doesn't hold bare to
21 the data.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

23 We go to Assemblywoman Seawright now,
24 three minutes.

1 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: Thank you,
2 Chairwoman Weinstein. And good afternoon.
3 Thank you, Chancellor, and to your team,
4 Hector and Matt and José and Mary Kay and
5 Maureen and Grace. I also want to extend my
6 deepest sympathy on the loss of your father.

7 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Thank you.

8 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: So I just
9 have a couple of quick questions.

10 With many students at the community
11 colleges eligible for TAP and Pell and other
12 financial programs, what would it cost to
13 implement free tuition, as President Biden
14 has pledged, at the community colleges?

15 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So let
16 me -- I can get that number for you. And I
17 had it in -- we have some estimates.

18 The one thing that I want to say about
19 this question, too, is that folks need to
20 define what "free" means. Is it first dollar
21 or last dollar? There's a lot of nuances as
22 to how free college and free community
23 colleges can be done. And I think it's
24 important that as we go into this debate,

1 right, even these of us who are supportive of
2 things like this, that we get into the
3 nuances. Because, you know, that can mean
4 what we want is the most affordable quality
5 community college and four-year college
6 experience. Right?

7 But we can give you -- I mean, we've
8 done some projections, and we would be happy
9 to share them with you.

10 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: Thank you.

11 And back during election season,
12 118,000 people were sent in my district to
13 early vote at Wagner Middle School. And I
14 know that CUNY has some of its campuses
15 available for early voting.

16 But what would it take or require for
17 additional campuses of CUNY to be available?
18 I know the Board of Elections is examining
19 right now different areas -- Marymount
20 Manhattan College, in my district, has
21 offered again to be an early voting site. So
22 what would it require of CUNY for more of
23 your campuses to be sites?

24 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So we --

1 thank you for that. We want to be the best
2 partner to the Board of Elections. And, you
3 know, part of our public education is passing
4 the knowledge of civic engagement to our
5 students. Right? So what better way than to
6 pass that and to be supportive of such an
7 important thing.

8 The challenge that we have faced in
9 the past is that that requires sort of
10 substantial space, right, and it's
11 particularly challenging when you are running
12 classes. And when we go back to more
13 face-to-face classes, that scheduling
14 becomes, you know, sort of complicated.
15 Right? In terms of the space that is needed.

16 It was a little bit easier this year,
17 right, because by being mostly virtual, we
18 have more flexibility in our campuses. But
19 that's some of the tensions that we've seen
20 in the past. But we're happy to be very
21 flexible to help the Board of Elections.

22 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: Great,
23 terrific. Thank you. My district has a lot
24 of senior citizens, and they love to --

1 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Rebecca --
2 Assemblywoman, we've gone over the time. So
3 perhaps you can send a question, we'll ask it
4 later.

5 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: Thank you.

6 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Senator
7 Krueger, we go to you.

8 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: There we go, I
9 got myself unmuted. I apologize.

10 Good afternoon. Thank you for being
11 here, and condolences for your family's loss.

12 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Thank you.

13 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: I have a series
14 of questions that you're just going to write
15 down and get back to us on. Okay? Because I
16 need it in written form.

17 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Okay.

18 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay. So we know
19 that CUNY got \$300 million plus 186 million
20 from the feds this year. I would like a
21 chart breaking down how you spent the money.
22 And then I would also like a chart I guess
23 projecting how you're spending -- I think
24 you're scheduled to get over 500 million from

1 the CARES Act for the coming fiscal year, so
2 I want to see how that money is being spent.

3 And interestingly, Senator Pichardo --
4 Senator? Hello -- Assemblymember Pichardo
5 raised a ventilation issue, and you said that
6 would have to fall into some state capital
7 funds. But I would think that's the kind of
8 money that could be spent from the federal
9 for making sure your buildings and
10 classrooms are safe for students to return
11 to, because you need a modern COVID-protected
12 ventilation system.

13 So I would also suggest you just
14 double-check the wording of the federal
15 dollars on that, because maybe we can be
16 helpful to broaden the interpretation of the
17 federal language.

18 So now we get to -- and everybody is
19 talking about this, so I'm trying to just ask
20 for a chart and we'll be able to look at it
21 together. For the last 10 years, one column
22 that shows your number of students in CUNY --
23 you can do it senior and community colleges
24 separated. Next column, number of faculty.

1 You can do it full-time and then adjunct, or
2 whatever you -- right? And then number of
3 other CUNY employees. I think you put them
4 under "administrative."

5 Because there are a lot of people out
6 there saying we keep reducing the number of
7 people teaching our students, but we keep
8 increasing the total number of people who
9 work for CUNY. I don't know if that's true.
10 I want to see it in chart format so we can
11 all take a look and see if that's the case.
12 And then we can ask questions about why, if
13 that is the case. All right?

14 I don't even know whether your
15 population went down or stayed the same
16 during COVID, because obviously you went from
17 in-class to online, and a number of people
18 have asked about that. But I also heard
19 there's a lot of students who decided the
20 online really wasn't going to work for them
21 and they're not going to spend their TAP year
22 money on a year that they don't think makes
23 any sense for them, which I empathize with.
24 I think that's perhaps a rational decision.

1 But we really need to understand your
2 total money, state and federal, and how
3 they're being spent and how life is changing.
4 Okay? So you'll be able to get us those
5 charts?

6 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: No -- no
7 problem.

8 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Great, I
9 appreciate that.

10 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Can I --
11 can I -- can I just -- since this goes -- you
12 know, people can watch this -- just so that
13 the -- the total number of CARES Act money
14 was 251 million. You provided a number that
15 was slightly higher; I just want to make
16 sure. And the projected amount from the
17 second stimulus is 455 million. You said
18 over five --

19 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: I read SUNY
20 numbers when I meant to read CUNY. So my
21 numbers go --

22 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: You know,
23 just -- you know.

24 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: No, I appreciate

1 that. Good, good, good. My -- I correct
2 myself.

3 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: But we'll
4 get you the breakdown. We'll get you the
5 breakdown. I just wanted to make sure that
6 for --

7 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Good. So my
8 numbers show 287 million institutional aid
9 from the feds, 158 million for student aid
10 from the feds in the year that is ending, and
11 then close to 500 million in the year coming
12 up. And you said four hundred and fifty --

13 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: -- 55.

14 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: -- 55 million,
15 okay, thank you for that.

16 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Can I just
17 quickly comment on the enrollment number?

18 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Yeah.

19 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: The --
20 the -- your commentary about particularly the
21 community college students. Because like I
22 said, the enrollment at the four-year
23 colleges remained mostly flat. In some
24 cases, it even went up. And the graduate

1 programs went up. It is the community
2 colleges.

3 And consistent with some service that
4 we have done and some data that we also have
5 seen at the national level, many students
6 that either were facing financial hardships
7 or concerned about how safe it was to be even
8 in an online learning environment, or who had
9 situations in their family dealing with
10 COVID, might have decided to sit out. Right?
11 And many of those students would have been
12 mostly students in the community college
13 sector, right, that maybe because of the
14 tighter dollars are making more precise
15 calculations, going back to your point about
16 using TAP or didn't feel as comfortable with
17 an online environment.

18 So we're getting ready to -- and we're
19 tapping to try to get those students back,
20 you know, beginning in the fall, hopefully.

21 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

22 So you and I once had a conversation
23 about this, but I've been asking around, and
24 so -- and it's been bugging me.

1 So we have a system in CUNY where we
2 put all the Ph.D. students in something
3 called The Graduate Center. Then
4 The Graduate Center made a decision that if
5 they couldn't afford to give every single
6 student there a stipend, they couldn't be a
7 student there and they would turn them down
8 from our Ph.D. programs.

9 First off, every other college says,
10 send them to us, we'd love to have Ph.D.
11 students that can afford to pay full freight,
12 we have no problem with that.

13 So again, I don't understand, for the
14 record, why CUNY turns away quality students
15 because they don't have or need the stipend
16 money. But then because you've limited to a
17 very small number how many new Ph.D. students
18 come in any given year to any given program,
19 you don't actually have enough of them to
20 fill classrooms under your mandate for larger
21 classes, and so you don't even have
22 professors teaching the classes they need,
23 which also discourages Ph.D. students from
24 coming to CUNY.

1 So again, you can wait and write it up
2 to me, that's fine, because we have very
3 little time today. I'm just saying I think
4 CUNY is intentionally stopping and closing
5 Ph.D. programs. And maybe that's your
6 decision and your policy decision. But I
7 would love to know why CUNY actually is
8 making the decision to not want to have Ph.D.
9 programs. Because that's where you're
10 heading.

11 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So the --
12 briefly, I will get you that. The change to
13 mostly -- almost exclusively stipend students
14 is a change that happened before my time.
15 Right? And I understand that the rationale
16 had to do that they wanted to be competitive
17 with other programs nationally.

18 There's -- there's very few people
19 that pay out-of-pocket for Ph.D. programs.
20 Right? It might be -- it might seem that
21 there's a lot of people out there; that is
22 not the case. So in a lot of the mostly
23 competitive programs, the students come in
24 with a stipend. And I believe that the

1 rationale, back when that was changed, was to
2 be able to be competitive to those students.

3 We have new leadership at The Graduate
4 Center. Let me revisit the issue with our
5 new president, President Garrell, who's
6 wonderful.

7 And actually one of the other things
8 is that I have mentioned to her that at
9 CUNY -- and COVID has sort of taken, you
10 know, most of the oxygen in the work that we
11 do. But that we are due for a comprehensive
12 look systemwide at how we do graduate
13 education. I think it's important that we do
14 that. We have some models that work very
15 well. They might need some tweaking, they
16 might need to be -- to look at them. And I
17 think that we need to have that conversation
18 systemwide.

19 And I was waiting to have the new
20 president of The Graduate Center to be
21 leading that effort, and we're going to get
22 going on that now.

23 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Good. I would
24 argue that there's also reasons to reevaluate

1 master's programs, because it is good for the
2 City and State of New York and for the
3 students who live in our city and state who
4 depend on the CUNY system to have options for
5 higher ed as well as the community colleges
6 and the four-year programs. So thank you for
7 that.

8 And then in my last minute or so -- I
9 don't remember whether we talked about this,
10 but I had talked about it with Chancellor
11 Malatras at SUNY, and he followed up. Is
12 CUNY following up sort of internally and
13 systemically about assuring that your
14 students who are now eligible for SNAP --
15 simply because they are students and meet the
16 income guidelines -- are getting signed up?
17 Because he seems to have figured out a way to
18 do it sort of centrally for 10,000 students
19 in one day. And CUNY's student population is
20 even more likely to be eligible for SNAP and
21 more in need of the food resources.

22 So are you doing anything parallel
23 with CUNY?

24 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Happy to

1 report that since the Governor adjusted his
2 eligibility, we have -- so far 7,000 students
3 have already been referred. So we are -- we
4 moved ahead on this in part because we
5 already had -- when the Governor made the
6 announcement, we already had in our central
7 CUNYfirst system, a way to identify the
8 students based on the information that
9 they're giving us and say, You might be
10 eligible, and make a connection to HRA.

11 So we had been working on that even
12 before the Governor made the very good
13 announcement of the added flexibility.

14 As a former SNAP administrator for the
15 Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, I am fully
16 behind this and we are pushing this since day
17 one. It was already in our system, so we're
18 just following up to doing that, and we're
19 actually looking for additional private
20 resources to get somebody centrally to help
21 us even be more aggressive in getting to
22 those students.

23 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Great. Glad to
24 hear it. Thank you very much, Chancellor.

1 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Thank you.

2 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Assembly.

3 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go now to
4 Assemblywoman Dickens, three minutes.

5 ASSEMBLYWOMAN DICKENS: Good
6 afternoon. And thank you, Madam Chair.

7 And thank you, Chancellor, for your
8 testimony. And I too join in giving my
9 deepest condolences on the loss of your
10 father.

11 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Thank you.

12 ASSEMBLYWOMAN DICKENS: First, I just
13 want to acknowledge City College, because
14 it's in my district. And they have opened
15 the campus during this very bad time of
16 pandemic for testing, food distribution to
17 the students as well as to the community, and
18 they have offered the campus for vaccine
19 distribution once it becomes available. So I
20 just wanted to say thank you for that.

21 But now I want to go on and ask a
22 question about the remote learning. Many of
23 the students have told me that remote
24 learning -- many of the educators are not

1 good at it.

2 Are you providing a class or would you
3 be willing to provide a class in order for
4 the professors -- and including the adjunct
5 professors -- that might want to continue
6 with remote learning, and we shouldn't turn
7 them away because they may be excellent, but
8 not on-site, that they can learn how to do
9 teaching remotely?

10 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Well,
11 thank you, Assemblywoman Dickens, for your
12 question. And a couple of things.

13 First, we are -- CUNY is ready to do
14 even more, and we've been in conversation
15 with the Governor's team to open up more
16 vaccination sites. As more of the vaccine
17 becomes available, we are ready to be
18 supportive of that effort, which we think
19 also, given our presence and a student body
20 of communities of color, right, would also
21 begin addressing this issue about the
22 inequities of who gets the vaccine. So happy
23 to be part of that effort, and ready for it.

24 To your question, we actually have

1 provided -- over 3,400 faculty members,
2 full-time and part-time, have done
3 professional development for online teaching.
4 It's something that we have really
5 invested -- our School of Professional
6 Studies won an award for the work that they
7 did in getting more of our teachers ready
8 precisely to address the point that you make.

9 And I'll add one more thing, is that
10 we also have a couple of additional courses
11 online -- they're not an official course --
12 that we have for our students that we have
13 developed to help them be better online
14 learners too. So it's not just the teachers,
15 we want our students to be better.

16 So we hope that when we go back to
17 normal, right, we have more of a mix --

18 ASSEMBLYWOMAN DICKENS: Thank you,
19 Chancellor. Madam Finance Chair in the
20 Senate, Liz Krueger, had asked for -- to
21 receive some charts. I'm asking her
22 permission, can that be broken down by campus
23 site, if that's acceptable to her?

24 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: And that

1 will be the information about faculty and
2 students and hired, right, by campus.

3 ASSEMBLYWOMAN DICKENS: Yes.

4 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: It's acceptable
5 to break it down farther if you can do that,
6 yes.

7 ASSEMBLYWOMAN DICKENS: Thank you.

8 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Yeah, we
9 do that already, so it's no issue,
10 Ms. Dickens. Happy to do that.

11 ASSEMBLYWOMAN DICKENS: Thank you.

12 And the last thing is just the Colin
13 Powell School of Labor and Urban Studies is
14 important, very important. Thank you.

15 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

16 Now we go to Assemblywoman Simon.

17 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: Thank you.

18 Thank you. And let me also share any
19 condolences, Chancellor.

20 I have a couple of questions that I
21 wanted to follow up with you on about
22 resources for our students with disabilities,
23 and the -- because there's still an issue
24 with having enough financing to provide those

1 support services. And I wanted to know what
2 efforts you have made to rectify that, to
3 increase those services.

4 And I also want to talk to you about
5 remote learning and some of the difficulties
6 I know students have experienced, and also
7 the way we're doing remote learning, how it's
8 affecting the learning of our students as
9 well as teaching of reading.

10 And so one is about -- A, it's access,
11 but also I think when it comes to remote
12 learning, we need to be looking at actually
13 the cognitive processes, that the students
14 are now having to rely on different ways of
15 learning, that their brains are doing
16 something different. And I don't know how
17 much we have looked at that.

18 And I'm curious whether your faculty,
19 for example, have looked at it. You have a
20 number of professionals there that are
21 familiar with those kinds of issues. And I
22 don't know whether that's being looked at,
23 and I'd love to know what if anything you've
24 learned and how we can support that.

1 And then the other issue is the
2 teaching of reading and how many schools
3 within the CUNY system are -- seem to be
4 rated, as you know, C, D, E -- or C, D, F
5 from the National Center of Teacher Quality
6 in the teaching of early reading.

7 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So let me
8 begin with that last one. I'll have to get
9 the information about that. That's something
10 that I'm not sort of aware of, so happy to
11 get you additional information. And also if
12 there's things from your end that you want me
13 specifically to tackle on, I'll be happy to
14 look at that.

15 We have -- one of the main areas of
16 concern when we moved to mostly distance
17 learning, first in the emergency mode back in
18 last spring, right, when we were dealing with
19 the first COVID wave, that we were all sort
20 of learning how to adapt.

21 But then afterwards, when we sort of
22 knew that it was going to be the best way to
23 move forward to keep people safe, has always
24 been instructing my team about making sure

1 that students with disabilities, right, get
2 the services and the support that they get
3 because it's easy for them to get lost in the
4 shuffle, particularly as we move to -- and
5 I'm particularly concerned about the services
6 they get. Right? Because I know that they
7 work very closely with the Disability Centers
8 on the campuses. And we've been keeping an
9 eye on those services and trying to be
10 proactive in giving them support. Because we
11 know that we -- you know, CUNY is probably
12 the institution of choice for many students
13 with disabilities, and we want to continue to
14 earn that trust and to do more.

15 And actually, we wanted to do
16 something to support those students and using
17 some of the funding from the Chancellor's
18 Emergency Fund, which was the more flexible
19 money that we have access to, that we
20 fundraise for, we made several of the
21 emergency grant allocations to support those
22 students directly. Because, you know, they
23 didn't seem to be part of any CARES Act
24 category or things like that.

1 On the learning side, it's been
2 interesting. As somebody who's been saying
3 that we need to focus on pedagogy, I've
4 enjoyed that people are interested in how
5 we're learning more. And I hope that we
6 continue that interest when we go back to the
7 new normal.

8 The provost and his team has partnered
9 with research entities to do some research on
10 how well the learning process has gone with
11 our students. So we're going to have some
12 data on that, because it's something that
13 we're also very concerned about. I'll be
14 happy to share those results with you when we
15 get them.

16 We had some work also done in the
17 spring, so there's data that we have that
18 we'll be happy to share. We've been working
19 with the added resources on mental health to
20 support the students who have had issues in
21 adapting to the distance learning modality
22 and to find ways to be supportive of them.
23 And some of the training that we've done of
24 the faculty has gone to some of the issues

1 that you address, in making faculty that are
2 fabulous, but have never taught online, more
3 aware of many of these issues.

4 And I'd be happy to, you know, discuss
5 it in more depth if you want with more
6 specific questions.

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you,
8 Chancellor.

9 So now we're going to move on to
10 Assemblymember Mitaynes.

11 Marcela, are you there?

12 ASSEMBLYWOMAN MITAYNES: Yes, just
13 give me one second. My internet is a bit
14 unstable, so I needed to call in, get the
15 video going.

16 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: No problem.

17 ASSEMBLYWOMAN MITAYNES: Thank you so
18 much.

19 {In Spanish.} I'm sorry for your
20 loss.

21 {In Spanish.} My question has to do
22 particularly with the 30,000 -- where the
23 members of the professional staff were
24 contractually mandated for a 2 percent pay

1 increase in November of 2020. And is there a
2 violation with the union contract and the law
3 by delaying the contractual negotiated
4 raises?

5 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Thank you
6 for your question and your condolences. And
7 thank you for your support.

8 The issue of the contractual raises in
9 November -- again, it is something that for
10 us was a measure that we had to take that we
11 were not, you know, happy to make. It went
12 with a lot of other decisions that we made,
13 like furloughing some of the administrative
14 staff members. And we hope that it's
15 something that when we have more budget
16 certainty, we can sort of respond to. We
17 intend, right, to be able to give those
18 dollars back to the PSC members.

19 My understanding is that there's an
20 arbitration hearing about that, so I would
21 like to sort of keep my comments limited,
22 given that we have that forum coming up.

23 ASSEMBLYWOMAN MITAYNES: Okay. So the
24 next question is about the CARES Act money.

1 There's all this federal relief and we're
2 still making cuts. The layoffs of adjunct
3 faculty in the middle of the pandemic, where
4 research shows that there's, you know, a
5 benefit in having smaller class sizes. The
6 staffing is essential, and so is the funding.
7 So if classes need to be small, spending
8 needs to be the priority. What is happening
9 with the CARES money?

10 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So thank
11 you for your question.

12 So the CARES Act money in the first
13 place, right, went -- had very strict
14 guidelines of how it could be used, even
15 though some folks have a misunderstanding of
16 how that money could be used. Right? And we
17 litigated that misunderstanding with the PSC.

18 It's money that has to go towards
19 costs that we lost in COVID. Right? And the
20 money that came from the CARES Act, for
21 example, was 118. Right? We had 68 alone in
22 added expenses of cleaning, PPE and things
23 associated with COVID.

24 So the money was to pay for those

1 things, to pay for the cost of moving to
2 distance learning, the laptops that we got
3 for the students, some of that
4 infrastructure, they paid for that. So
5 that's where the bulk of that money -- it
6 reimbursed some campuses that have dorms for
7 their losses. They're very, very strict
8 guidelines.

9 Luckily, the next stimulus provides
10 more flexibility. And we're going to put
11 those resources, to the extent that we're
12 allowed to by the Department of Education,
13 into, you know, things that are
14 mission-critical. Teaching and classes for
15 students, support services for the students,
16 mental health, advising -- all those things
17 is how we're going to prioritizing that
18 funding, always consistent with the
19 guidelines that we get from the Department of
20 Education, which has yet to clearly say
21 exactly what is permissible and what's not.
22 And we're waiting for that clarity before we
23 make decisions on the investments. But
24 they're going to be, to the extent that we

1 have the flexibility, focused on the student
2 success.

3 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you,
4 Chancellor. We now go to -- and thank you,
5 Assemblywoman. We now go to Assemblywoman
6 Glick for her second round of five minutes.

7 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you very
8 much --

9 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Five minutes on
10 the clock, please.

11 Go ahead, Deborah. We'll deal with
12 it.

13 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: They asked me to
14 start my video, and I'll just see if it
15 starts to freeze; I'm going to knock it off.

16 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Five minutes on
17 the clock, please. Five minutes on the
18 clock. Thank you.

19 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Not 10. I could
20 have used the 10.

21 (Laughter.)

22 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Let me join
23 others in offering condolences on your
24 family's loss and also on the CUNY family's

1 loss.

2 We face a teacher shortage which I
3 think is going to get worse as a result of
4 the pandemic. And I think a lot of
5 teachers are going to just say they're close
6 to retirement, they've had it, whatever.

7 Does the state requirement for a 3.0
8 GPA to enter a graduate teaching program
9 interfere with the ability of CUNY to admit
10 students into their master's programs? And
11 does this have an impact on diversity?

12 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So I'll
13 have to go back to our dean of education and
14 get a better sense of the data to sort of
15 look at that. I'm sure that people have
16 looked at the impact of that and other
17 admission standards. And I think that you're
18 absolutely correct, that we need to be ready
19 to have that next wave of teachers, because I
20 think that it doesn't require a crystal ball
21 to know that that's going to be happening all
22 across a number of sectors of the economy,
23 teaching being one.

24 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Yeah, yeah, I

1 think nursing as well.

2 Now, where are you on capital
3 improvements? Many facilities are older,
4 some are rentals. But what do you need to do
5 to make facilities more energy efficient?
6 Clearly the city is moving in a -- to have a
7 requirement for a lot of buildings. And I'm
8 just wondering where you stand on that.

9 And one other question while I have
10 time. There were plans some time ago for an
11 annex, a CUNY annex in the Rockaways. And I
12 think it fell off the table, probably
13 financial constraints. And I'm just
14 wondering -- I've been asked by members -- if
15 that is, you know, projected at some point.

16 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So I am
17 not familiar with the conversation of the
18 Rockaways, although from my previous life at
19 Queens College, in conversations with the
20 councilmember who represents that district, I
21 know that there's transportation issues for
22 students there to come to the system.

23 So let me go back and do a little bit
24 of history on that. And I -- you know, so

1 let me do some homework on that issue.

2 The other thing also is that we'll be
3 happy to share. You know, we have an entire
4 sustainability effort that is looking at all
5 this work in our campuses existing and in the
6 investments that we're making, either in
7 repairs and new buildings that we have, as
8 part of the capital of the five-year capital
9 plan.

10 Let me then also share that with you,
11 because that might have some of the specifics
12 that you're looking for in terms of
13 sustainability and investment in those areas.

14 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: I'm just
15 wondering where you are -- and this is
16 something that you can get to us. Again,
17 nursing programs tend to be more expensive,
18 and I know that some of the campuses have
19 that. There's been a question asked about
20 whether or not we could use more simulators
21 for the clinical part, because it --
22 certainly with COVID, the placement in
23 hospitals dropped to zero.

24 And there is a concern that that will

1 continue, and yet students need the clinical
2 work in order to be -- for the purpose of
3 their licensure.

4 So I'm wondering whether there have
5 been discussions at your end -- and again,
6 you can get back to us about this -- around
7 the issue of using simulators to actually
8 stand in for clinical placements.

9 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Quickly, I
10 will get that. Very much so. I mean, part
11 of our budget request asks for additional
12 investments in nursing, because we feel that
13 we have to meet the challenge of the growing
14 demand that is there, and that we can do it
15 maximizing our facilities, investing in some
16 of the facilities on the capital side.

17 But to your point, we learned some
18 things as a result of this transition to
19 mostly online. Let's use them. But on our
20 end -- and kudos to my University Provost
21 Cruz, who's been looking at this thing too --
22 a lot of the clinical internships, we leave
23 the campuses to broker those relationships.
24 Right? We feel that if the central office

1 took more of a centralized approach, we could
2 really maximize a lot more of those
3 opportunities in ways that created more
4 opportunities for all our students, and they
5 didn't leave the negotiations to be done
6 program by program and campus by campus.

7 That's something that we're looking
8 for, because we do want to expand our
9 footprint in nursing.

10 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you very
11 much.

12 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Back to the
13 Senate now.

14 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

15 And our chair of Higher Ed, Toby
16 Stavisky, to close. Five minutes.

17 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you. Thank
18 you, Senator, Assemblywoman.

19 Chancellor, incidentally, I offer my
20 condolences also --

21 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Thank you.

22 SENATOR STAVISKY: -- on your ex-boss,
23 and to the rest of the CUNY family.

24 Let me follow up on just two areas

1 where you testified. And I'm going to ask
2 both questions together so that if I run out
3 of time, you'll give me the written answer.

4 First, you talked about students who
5 graduated from high school and never showed
6 up. That number was 600?

7 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Let me --

8 SENATOR STAVISKY: Whatever. You can
9 get back to me. Because I'm going to ask
10 you -- I think Senator Krueger had a great
11 idea, a chart. Go -- not only the students
12 who graduated from high school, but I suspect
13 there are students who took a gap year in
14 high school, so to speak.

15 So if you and the chancellor of the
16 city schools, the DOE, could get together,
17 that would be a very interesting study of the
18 students who didn't show up, where did they
19 go, where are they.

20 And also, I think it ought to be
21 compared to the 2020 high school graduates,
22 so that we have a comparison.

23 And the second question -- I asked you
24 about the CARES Act and how much was left in

1 the account, and it was \$77 million, I think
2 you testified. What's happened to that
3 money? I'm just curious. Is it just sitting
4 in an interest-bearing account or something?
5 The interest is obviously very low. What's
6 happening to that money? Just curious.

7 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So that --
8 that -- so I'll have Provost Cruz speak to
9 the number of the DOE students that we're
10 trying to reach out, because they're working
11 on that effort, in a sec.

12 But the CARES Act money is going to be
13 part of the budget that is going to be
14 presented to complete this year, in the
15 fiscal year '21, and in some ways the fact
16 that that allocation was -- you know, comes
17 at this time is going to be beneficial for
18 us. Because with the new rules approved with
19 the second set of stimulus funding, which is
20 more flexible, we're going to be able to use
21 those rules and not the previous rules, that
22 were particularly restrictive and actually
23 was making difficult the spending in some of
24 the community colleges because they have so

1 many restrictions.

2 So we're going to be able to take
3 advantage of more flexibility coming from the
4 new set of rules.

5 And Provost Cruz, you want to talk
6 about this?

7 CUNY PROVOST CRUZ: Sure. Thank you,
8 Chancellor. And --

9 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: {Inaudible.}

10 SENATOR STAVISKY: And also, I also
11 should have jumped in when you talked about
12 the previous Queens College president. I too
13 think he was one of the best.

14 And we appreciated your service in
15 Queens, and we were sorry to lose you, but
16 obviously now you can help everybody, the
17 rest of the campuses, the way you helped
18 Queens College --

19 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Too kind
20 too kind. Thank you.

21 SENATOR STAVISKY: -- as somebody who
22 went to graduate school. Thank you.

23 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you, Toby.
24 Assembly, I think we're closed out.

1 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes. And so
2 are we.

3 Chancellor, I want to also offer my
4 condolences to you, your family, and just
5 thank you for being here today and also for
6 how CUNY has stepped up during this pandemic
7 to make sure that as many of our constituents
8 that want to continue with their education
9 under these difficult circumstances have been
10 able to.

11 So thank you for being here.

12 And we're going to go on to our next
13 witness, the New York State Education
14 Department Interim Commissioner Betty Rosa.

15 Welcome back. And we'll be able to go
16 right into your testimony with us today.

17 Thank you.

18 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Thank you
19 so much.

20 Good afternoon, Chairs Krueger,
21 Weinstein, Stavisky, and Glick, and members
22 of the Senate and Assembly here today. I'm
23 Dr. Betty Rosa, the Interim Commissioner of
24 Education.

1 I am joined today by Chief Financial
2 Officer Phyllis Morris, Deputy Commissioners
3 Sarah Benson, Dr. Bill Murphy and Ceylane
4 Meyers-Ruff, as well as Assistant
5 Commissioner Dr. Anael Alston.

6 I also want to thank Chancellor Young
7 and our cochairs of Higher Ed, both Regents
8 Cashin and Collins, and all the Regents who
9 are watching today.

10 As you know, during 2020 -- this has
11 been a year like no other, with the Governor
12 ordering institutions of higher education to
13 stop in-person instruction this past spring
14 due to the pandemic. This mandatory closure
15 forced colleges and universities across
16 New York State to undertake an unprecedented
17 transformation, forcing faculty and our
18 students to shift from in-person instruction
19 to all-remote learning.

20 I want to thank and commend our
21 students, their families, administration,
22 faculty, and support staff across New York
23 State for their efforts in making this
24 important and necessary shift.

1 The pandemic and the changes it has
2 brought about have been especially
3 challenging for foster care youth, students
4 in opportunity programs, and students with
5 disabilities. We need to support our
6 postsecondary students, as their needs and
7 challenges have only increased during this
8 time. In addition, we need to ensure
9 supports are in place for postsecondary
10 education for students that are at the
11 highest risk of either not attending college
12 or not completing a degree.

13 As you can see on Slides 3 through 7,
14 our opportunity programs provide access and
15 are designed to help these students. As
16 such, we were pleased to see that the
17 Executive Budget proposal did not cut any of
18 these critical programs. Over 40,000
19 students are served by these opportunity
20 programs.

21 However, we do ask for needed
22 investments, on Slides 8 and 9, to support
23 our students with disabilities. The
24 department has been engaged in collaborative

1 efforts with our higher-education sectors to
2 establish a legislative framework advocating
3 for critical new funding. This funding would
4 supplement, not supplant, any other funding
5 in existence for support and accommodations
6 of students with disabilities, and in terms
7 of summer college preparation programs,
8 training, and data collection.

9 We need to start this critical
10 conversation of how, as a state, we can
11 better support our students with disabilities
12 to be successful in college. A \$7 million
13 grant program would be allocated, in a
14 proportional manner by each identified
15 student with a disability, to eligible
16 degree-granting colleges.

17 Moving on to the Executive Budget's
18 proposed Article VII provisions, I need to
19 note our opposition to their program approval
20 proposal. This proposal would permit any new
21 curriculum or program of study offered by
22 certain not-for-profit colleges to be deemed
23 approved by the governing body of such
24 college or university. As written, this

1 proposal would eliminate the department's
2 role in reviewing the majority of program
3 proposals for almost all independent colleges
4 and universities, as well as SUNY and CUNY
5 institutions.

6 The department's independent review of
7 these program proposals provides an important
8 level of consumer and student protection.
9 Currently, the majority of these reviews and
10 approvals occur within 30 days of receipt of
11 any application by our staff. The Board of
12 Regents and the Department does not want to
13 stand in the way of innovation, but we do
14 want to ensure that our students, their time
15 and money are invested in quality higher
16 education programs. This important
17 independent review process protects our
18 students.

19 Now I'd like to turn to Slides 11
20 through 15, where we provide you with updates
21 on the work of our Office of the Professions.

22 We're happy to see that the Executive
23 Budget included \$7.85 million in capital
24 spending authority to continue our systems

1 modernization efforts for the Office of the
2 Professions. OP's modernization plan is
3 underway already to replace our antiquated
4 mainframe system with a custom-built online
5 licensing platform. This platform, that will
6 handle all licensing and renewal activities
7 in one system, will improve customer
8 experience and back-office processes.

9 The first phase of the OP
10 modernization program, the launch of online
11 applications, is now available for all
12 professions. Coming later this year, an
13 enhanced self-service FAQ database and
14 updated, fully accessible website will be
15 released. However, current hiring and
16 staffing constraints hinder licensing and
17 registering health professionals in a timely
18 manner at a time when this is even more
19 critical than ever.

20 Our Office of Professions is funded by
21 a revenue account that is solely funded by
22 fees paid by licensees and applicants. These
23 fees bring in approximately \$55 million in
24 annual revenue, and these funds cannot be

1 spent without an authorization in the enacted
2 State Budget. For years, OP was held to
3 appropriation and spending levels that were
4 significantly below its revenue intake.

5 With executive and legislative
6 support, which the department was thankful
7 for, OP's spending and appropriation levels
8 were increased in the 2019-2020 budget, which
9 provided OP with the ability to begin to
10 rebuild their staffing. However, the
11 rebuilding process had only just begun when
12 the pandemic hit and spending and staffing
13 controls were put in place by the Division of
14 Budget. Since DOB instituted a hiring freeze
15 in April 2020, OP has experienced a rapid
16 loss of staff in critical areas.

17 While OP received DOB approval on
18 eight waivers early this week, priority
19 waivers continue to pend at DOB, despite OP's
20 critical role in overseeing professionals on
21 the front lines of the current pandemic.

22 OP staffing today stands at only 296
23 employees, which is far short of our target
24 of 348. As we all know, this loss of staff

1 affects OP's ability to process license
2 applications and educational programs in a
3 timely manner, resulting in review cycle
4 times of 12 weeks or more in nursing programs
5 at a time when nurses, we all know, are
6 critically needed. Staffing losses have also
7 negatively impacted on the time to resolve
8 professional misconduct complaints.

9 These delays result in avoidable risks
10 to public health and safety. This could be
11 addressed if OP were exempt from the state
12 hiring and spending restrictions consistent
13 with revenue generated for its account.
14 However, if these drastic hiring freeze
15 constraints continue, the ability of OP to
16 meet its full array of responsibilities will
17 continue to deteriorate to dangerous levels.
18 We would like to work with you to address
19 this important public health and safety
20 issue.

21 Before I end my testimony, I would be
22 remiss not to thank our staff who work so
23 very hard on behalf of students, institutions
24 of higher education, and licensed

1 professionals across New York.

2 Thank you, and I look forward to your
3 questions.

4 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you,
5 Commissioner.

6 And we'll go to our Higher Ed chair,
7 Assemblywoman Deborah Glick, 10 minutes.
8 Thank you.

9 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: I warn everybody
10 that the video will go off if it starts to
11 freeze.

12 Good to see you, Commissioner. I'm
13 wondering, you made reference to having open
14 positions at -- in OP. I'm wondering what
15 your head count is down across SED. And I
16 know that there have been some retirements.
17 When it comes to program review, et cetera,
18 how many openings do you have?

19 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: I'm going
20 to turn to Phyllis, but I know we did --
21 thank you for the question, because we
22 actually last week began to do a deep dive
23 into not only our total numbers, but also
24 with the freeze and the fact that, you know,

1 we've been obviously having to deal with the
2 pandemic and the new projection, which is
3 close to another 50 positions.

4 So Phyllis, please?

5 NYSED CFO MORRIS: Hi. Yes, so a
6 couple of concerns.

7 One is that our full-time equivalent
8 target was taken down in the Executive Budget
9 by -- I believe it was 42 positions. So that
10 will actually keep us from being able to
11 backfill all of our current vacancies. I
12 believe we have about 80 vacancies that are
13 pending at the Division of Budget for
14 approval. And we have additional vacancies
15 because there are strict requirements on what
16 we're allowed to submit -- they have to meet
17 like health and safety or COVID response. So
18 we haven't been able to submit all of the
19 currently vacant positions.

20 So we can get you more specific
21 numbers, but the FTE reduction target will
22 prevent us, when we are able to submit
23 waivers that have expanded submission
24 criteria, from being able to fully backfill

1 all of our current positions. So we can
2 provide you with more specifics.

3 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Yeah, I'm
4 interested in the area of program review and
5 obviously in the Office of Professions,
6 because those are the two areas that impact
7 my committee. And those are concerns.

8 Certainly we hear longstanding
9 complaints about the delays in program
10 approval, even though it's my understanding
11 that, you know, 84 percent of them get done
12 within a 60-day period. I think there are
13 probably -- you know, it gets delayed when
14 you have questions. You have to get
15 responses. That comes off of your clock, but
16 is not necessarily within your control if
17 people haven't submitted everything that's
18 required.

19 Going back to the commissioner, I'm
20 wondering, on the opportunity programs, there
21 was -- there isn't any current withholding,
22 and there isn't a current cut, but there was
23 a period during this past year where you
24 were -- the Division of Budget was holding

1 back or delaying the approval for various
2 STEP, CSTEP programs, and obviously that had
3 an impact down the line.

4 Do you have a backlog of requests at
5 DOB for processing any of those requests from
6 the individual programs?

7 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Sure. So
8 once again, we have been pretty diligent in
9 really focusing on making sure that through
10 this pandemic we realize that our programs
11 and our support systems for our students is
12 critical. And so we have been constantly
13 engaging with DOB.

14 And Phyllis will tell you, you know,
15 as you indicated, in some cases we've had the
16 20 percent, right, cuts. We'll call them
17 withheld. And so those have had an impact.

18 But we also have, and we will share
19 with you, we did an analysis, we did a really
20 deep analysis of looking at each program and
21 the dollar amount in terms of the impact of
22 these. And we're more than glad to share
23 that with you as well.

24 Phyllis, I don't know if you want to

1 add anything else to that.

2 NYSED CFO MORRIS: I think just to
3 answer the question, I mean, across. So for
4 Liberty Partnerships, HEOP, STEP, CSTEP,
5 foster youth, we do have 20 percent
6 withholdings that we have not yet received
7 approval as to the date we can make those
8 repayments.

9 We have been told by Division of
10 Budget that we will be able to, by the end of
11 the state fiscal year, repay all of the
12 amounts that are in the millions that we're
13 currently holding pursuant to DOB direction.

14 But without a payment date we can't
15 schedule the payment or send the vouchers
16 over to OSC or make the processing --
17 finalize the processing in the statewide
18 financial system. So we're waiting for that
19 approval.

20 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Well, obviously
21 when schools are waiting, they submit to you.
22 So from their perspective, you haven't gotten
23 the money approved. So -- but that's
24 actually a DOB function, and you're just sort

1 of caught in the middle.

2 When it comes to the foster youth
3 initiative, there's a little bit more of a
4 step involved in order to get the
5 certification of who is a foster youth and
6 who isn't. Has SED had discussions with OCFS
7 about what we might do to make that run more
8 smoothly? Obviously there are privacy
9 concerns; that's the real -- real issue.

10 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Sure. I'm
11 going to turn to Bill Murphy, because these
12 discussions have in fact been taking place.
13 So we're happy to share that with you.

14 Bill?

15 NYSED DEP. COMMR. MURPHY: Yes,
16 thank you, Commissioner. And thank you,
17 Assemblywoman Glick.

18 Yes, we actually -- last year we were
19 able to get together with OCFS, and we had
20 successive meetings with our folks in our
21 Opportunity and Access offices, and we
22 actually turned around that process. And the
23 numbers are much better this year.

24 We streamlined a lot of the processes

1 with, you know, trying to get the names
2 certified. And I will say, you know, it was
3 the first year we would really be able to say
4 with OCFS that, you know, for -- I think it's
5 over a thousand students now in our Foster
6 Youth Skills Initiative program. So the
7 numbers are even higher, but we were able to
8 turn around that process much quicker.

9 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Well, that's
10 great.

11 We -- right now it's flat funding.
12 We're hopeful that if there is in fact
13 additional federal dollars, that we could
14 actually advance that number -- maybe not to
15 the usual full cohort, but at least to add
16 maybe a million dollars. And then all of
17 that, you know, like so much of our lives, is
18 dependent on what happens at the federal
19 level.

20 If we were able to expand that, do you
21 have the capacity to move that through?

22 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: We will
23 obviously, with -- you know, as we said
24 earlier with the staffing situation. But

1 this is such an important issue that we will
2 make a commitment to absolutely work on doing
3 so.

4 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Okay. Well, I
5 appreciate that. Obviously these are the
6 neediest students, students who have no
7 intact, stable family. And frequently -- you
8 know, we have concerns about -- let me just
9 raise one last thing. Enrollments are down.
10 You know, applications are down at colleges.
11 And some of that may be -- I don't know, did
12 I lose everything? Maybe not. So we're just
13 concerned that students may not be getting
14 the kind of counseling that they normally
15 would get, even though it's frequently
16 insufficient.

17 Have you had conversations about
18 ensuring that students who want to go
19 understand that there's financial aid, and
20 the rest of it? Maybe it's some of them
21 feeling that the pandemic has hurt their
22 families so much that they can't go.

23 What are you doing with interacting
24 with the chancellors and the heads of

1 state -- around the state, the education
2 leaders?

3 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Well, I
4 will tell you that I know, particularly with
5 New York City, with CUNY, we've had some of
6 the conversations around the support systems.

7 We've also -- you know, one of the
8 things, particularly with our special
9 education population, we actually have had
10 forums to really actually hear the voices of
11 our students and really capture the areas --
12 whether it's counseling or feeling a sense of
13 isolation, not feeling that we've got
14 different mechanisms in place to support them
15 as they continue in terms of their studies.
16 We even had conversations about some of the
17 students that are struggling with family
18 issues as well as trying to do their
19 studying.

20 And, you know, all of these
21 conversations have helped us in terms of some
22 of the forums that we're having. And we have
23 been able to also take those conversations
24 and clearly begin to have conversations of

1 sharing those.

2 And Bill, I think you may want to add
3 to some of the other work that we're doing in
4 that area.

5 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Very briefly,
6 please.

7 NYSED DEP. COMMR. MURPHY: Yes, very
8 briefly.

9 You may remember we had some regional
10 reopening meetings before the fall semester
11 started, Assemblywoman Glick, and we had all
12 the sectors there. And that was one of the
13 topics that definitely came up, even before
14 the semester started in 2020, the fall
15 semester.

16 And as the commissioner said, we've
17 been engaged with this, our cochairs for
18 higher ed. And I've been hearing actually in
19 the past few weeks from a number of -- on the
20 Board of Regents that, you know, they want us
21 to actually really keep this at the fore and
22 make sure that we're, you know, working with
23 the stakeholders, you know, with all the
24 sectors with this issue. Because just like

1 in P-12, this has become, you know, a P-20
2 issue, obviously.

3 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Yeah, we can
4 follow up on this later. And thank you very
5 much.

6 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

7 We go to the Senate.

8 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

9 Toby Stavisky, 10 minutes.

10 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you. And
11 thank you, Commissioner, for your testimony.

12 The Executive Budget gave you a lot
13 more work to do. There is a shift from --
14 some of the agenda items in the DOH have been
15 shifted to SED, and with the staffing
16 programs you've had at the Office of the
17 Professions.

18 And I particularly want to mention the
19 OPMC, the Office of Professional Medical
20 Conduct. They gave you some oversight
21 functions for you to take a look at.
22 Secondly, the expansion of the scope of
23 practice of the pharmacists, especially on
24 the collaborative drug therapy management

1 program.

2 How do -- do you see any problems with
3 SED assuming these additional
4 responsibilities?

5 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Well, I'm
6 going to start by saying some of these are
7 concerns which of course are issues of the
8 staffing. Having the staffing, as you
9 mentioned, is critical in a time when there
10 have been so many demands on the -- you know,
11 OP and the department. I think it's -- also
12 some of it is programmatic, you know, to have
13 the pharmacists, the scope of the pharmacy
14 issue in terms of diagnosing and determining
15 medical treatments.

16 Which I'm going to turn to Sarah,
17 because it's been more than just staffing.
18 It's been staffing and also some of the ways
19 and requirements -- and we are always
20 concerned about the integrity and the
21 standards of our programs and making sure
22 that we are, you know, keeping in mind the
23 health and safety of our communities. And
24 with that, I'm going to turn to Sarah Benson.

1 NYSED DEP. COMMR. BENSON: {Distorted
2 audio.} Thank you, Commissioner. And thank
3 you, Senator. Absolutely, and we appreciate
4 the question. And obviously the details of
5 the question, we're happy to engage with you
6 in conversations offline to get the --

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: There seems to
8 be something wrong with your audio. Can you
9 just --

10 SENATOR STAVISKY: Maybe switch to
11 audio?

12 NYSED DEP. COMMR. BENSON: {Distorted
13 audio.} Hold on. Is that better?

14 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: No.

15 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: No.

16 SENATOR STAVISKY: No. We need a
17 pharmacist, I think, to fix this.

18 (Laughter.)

19 NYSED DEP. COMMR. BENSON: {Distorted
20 audio.} I don't know how to make it better.
21 Any suggestions?

22 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Turn off the
23 video.

24 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Go to

1 audio instead of --

2 SENATOR STAVISKY: Yeah, that's what I
3 meant.

4 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Turn off your
5 video.

6 NYSED DEP. COMMR. BENSON: {Distorted
7 audio.} Is that better?

8 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: No, I
9 think, Sarah, it's still --

10 SENATOR STAVISKY: Can I make a
11 suggestion?

12 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Sure.

13 SENATOR STAVISKY: Why don't you
14 submit it in writing to us?

15 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA:
16 Absolutely. Because we have looked at, as
17 you suggested, the pharmacists and the scope
18 of the work, and we have several concerns
19 with it. So we will definitely submit that
20 in writing.

21 SENATOR STAVISKY: Okay. I was going
22 to ask -- it's like a football game -- to
23 reset the clock, but I don't think it's going
24 to be necessary.

1 You talked at great length about the
2 Office of the Professions. Is there anything
3 besides the staffing level where you're
4 having a problem?

5 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Sure. We
6 do have problems in terms of the telehealth
7 area. We have various concerns there in
8 terms of standards and the continuous issue
9 and implementing the recommendation by March
10 31, 2022, which is just right around the
11 corner. So when we -- (microphone muted).

12 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: You've gone on
13 mute. You accidentally hit mute.

14 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Okay, I'm
15 back.

16 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: There you go,
17 you're back.

18 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Okay. So
19 with the -- we have various concerns, for
20 example, in the area of telehealth. We have
21 concerns about the standards, the continuous
22 work with other states, the fact that we have
23 also -- we are -- it's giving us the date of
24 March 31, 2022, which is right around the

1 corner. And so all of that planning, knowing
2 that -- you know, the whole telehealth issue
3 is a good thing, but we really have to do it
4 in a way that it's appropriate, it supports
5 obviously communities and individuals.

6 And so this takes time. It's not
7 something that, you know, we -- we'd love to
8 share with you. Because as I said, we did
9 analyze this and love to share with you what
10 our specific concerns are around that area,
11 as well as the scope of the pharmacists. I
12 mean, they are now being looked at to do --
13 to diagnose and to --

14 SENATOR STAVISKY: I caught that, yes.

15 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Yeah. And
16 so with all of that, you know, we're also
17 concerned about the checks and balances in
18 some of these issues. So we will definitely
19 get a written response to you in several of
20 our concerns in this -- in these areas.

21 SENATOR STAVISKY: Yeah. Also there's
22 a change, major change in the OPMC, the
23 fingerprinting and the removal of the names
24 if they don't respond after two years. How

1 do you feel about that?

2 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Yeah,
3 absolutely. I mean, licensing, you know, as
4 we know it has been a -- you know, a
5 permanent situation. And so for us, it's --
6 you know, the idea that we have never asked
7 for, you know, the fingerprinting and we
8 have -- you know, we really have to take a --
9 again, take a look at this, because it's got
10 implications. If somehow something happens
11 and people don't respond the first time or
12 the second time, it's really an unfair
13 situation.

14 So we -- again, this is one that we
15 will definitely, as Sarah is not on, we will
16 get you a written response as well.

17 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.
18 Particularly on the scope on the pharmacists.

19 And I might add, on the
20 fingerprinting, when I became a teacher a
21 long time ago at the old Board of Education,
22 I was fingerprinted even then. It happens in
23 many states, from what I understand.

24 Lastly, I appreciated your comments

1 about the addition of new programs. To me,
2 it's very similar to almost a
3 self-certification process, which I think
4 is -- can be damaging in many ways. So I
5 thank you and -- oh, yeah, have there been
6 any problems with the opportunity programs?
7 I know you only administer some of them.

8 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Bill, I --

9 SENATOR STAVISKY: Because there's
10 been no cut in funding, which is good.

11 NYSED DEP. COMMR. MURPHY: Yeah. As
12 you know, Senator Stavisky, the issues we had
13 were when the 20 percent withholding was in
14 effect and we were -- you know, we obviously
15 were getting a lot of, you know, issues
16 related to they might have had to furlough
17 staff and, you know, deal with a lot of the
18 20 percent withholding.

19 But since that, you know, is not in
20 effect right now, or it's -- we seem to have
21 had them stabilize a bit.

22 SENATOR STAVISKY: Good. Thank you
23 very much. And thank you for taking on the
24 position.

1 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Thank you.

2 NYSED DEP. COMMR. MURPHY: Thank you.

3 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: All right,

4 Assembly.

5 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to the
6 ranker in Higher Ed, Assemblymember Walczyk.

7 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Thanks so much,
8 Chairwoman.

9 A couple of questions here. The SUNY
10 chancellor brought up today that it takes
11 200 days-plus for a program review, and that
12 SED is a good chunk of that timeline. As
13 SUNY continues to need to be flexible for new
14 programs, I was wondering if you could just
15 answer a couple of questions about how it
16 works on your end for me, Commissioner.

17 How long does it take for SED to
18 review any programmatic additions or changes,
19 usually?

20 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: And if you
21 notice we -- and we also -- and again, we'll
22 share this with you -- we really took a deep
23 dive into the analysis.

24 Now, keep in mind that SUNY submits

1 the proposal -- and sometimes we have
2 questions, right, as you well know. And we
3 go back and forth, and it could take -- you
4 know, we've had situations -- and we're going
5 to share with you some of these specifics
6 where it could be sitting in terms of SUNY's
7 responding to our questions for a period of
8 time. And then therefore the clock is still
9 ticking. And it comes back to us, SUNY can
10 then send revised proposals to -- you know,
11 to us.

12 And at the same time, we basically
13 have been saying that, you know, in looking
14 at our time frame we really see the
15 importance of this and try to turn this
16 around as quickly as possible.

17 Bill?

18 NYSED DEP. COMMR. MURPHY: Yes, thank
19 you.

20 Quickly, what we did was we just did a
21 quick analysis of what 2020 looked like for
22 our program proposals. And the numbers we
23 had were we finished 60 percent of the
24 proposals within 30 days or less.

1 And we know that there's definitely
2 proposals out there, though, that go longer
3 than that. Many of them, you know, could
4 be --

5 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: What -- is that
6 because 60 percent -- sorry to cut you off,
7 Bill.

8 NYSED DEP. COMMR. MURPHY: That's
9 okay.

10 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Is that because
11 60 percent of the proposals are just simple
12 changes and it takes you 30 days to stamp
13 them, essentially?

14 NYSED DEP. COMMR. MURPHY: It could be
15 a combination of that, or that the proposal
16 came in and it was just very well done, there
17 were no issues with faculty, resources, it
18 was not a master plan amendment, it did not
19 have, you know, say different professional
20 licensure clinical experiences associated
21 with it.

22 You know, so it could be a combination
23 of, you know, that it was a simple proposal
24 or change or that, you know, it truly was a

1 proposal that did not have any issues that we
2 saw when we overlaid it on the standards.

3 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: I appreciate
4 that.

5 Has SED ever denied a program outright
6 that SUNY has requested? Have you ever said
7 no, that's a bad idea, we're not doing it?

8 NYSED DEP. COMMR. MURPHY: Typically
9 the way it works is that those proposals, in
10 many cases, just like with accreditation
11 bodies, we go through an iterative process
12 and we try our best to get to that point
13 where it gets registered.

14 But there have been proposals where,
15 you know, they've not been able to, say, get
16 the specialized accreditation body approval.
17 And in many cases those proposals just kind
18 of, you know, die on the vine as it is,
19 because you cannot -- you can't launch
20 certain programs without accreditation.
21 So --

22 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: So is -- yeah,
23 and SUNY has accreditation. This is probably
24 a question to bounce back to the

1 commissioner. Because I'm just trying to
2 understand this from a higher level.

3 It seems like, you know, if they're
4 talking about 200 days-plus of bureaucracy,
5 for us to turn to any institution -- think
6 about it as policymakers -- or back to our
7 constituents who have questions about these
8 programs, that we're in dire need when we're
9 talking about certain professions that have
10 shortages. The Governor is talking about new
11 windmill programs and developing technologies
12 where you need to expedite things
13 programmatically.

14 Would it make more sense, because SUNY
15 already has accreditation and has access to
16 those same institutions that you do, to just
17 cut SED out of the process? I know -- I'm
18 always impressed by how large your building
19 is and how much SED does in the State of
20 New York. I think it's underappreciated how
21 much you're involved in. My office in the
22 Legislative Office Building looks just at the
23 SED building downtown, and I often think
24 about how much your hands are involved in.

1 Is this one thing that us as
2 policymakers should be looking to take off of
3 your plate and let SUNY handle?

4 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: I would
5 really have reservations, because it's a
6 program review. It's back to reviewing
7 yourself, in some ways. And, you know, by
8 design we want to ensure the integrity and
9 the alignment with standards.

10 And so at a time when colleges, as you
11 know, are facing particularly critical
12 issues, that we want to make sure that we
13 maintain program authority and oversight.

14 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Thanks,
15 Commissioner. I appreciate it. I'm out of
16 time.

17 I just want to make one last pitch on
18 that, and also to our legislative leaders.
19 On Bundy Aid, I fully support restoring the
20 \$35.1 million cut in this budget.

21 Thanks very much.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

23 Now to the Senate.

24 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you. I

1 think I'm the next Senator.

2 So thank you, Commissioner. And
3 again, nice to see you twice, recently. And
4 thank you for agreeing to take on this job.
5 And hopefully you're getting the sense that
6 we hope you don't run away anytime soon.

7 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Thank you.

8 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: So the
9 Comptroller's office recently released an
10 audit that's -- I guess the headline was "SED
11 Missed Red Flags of Proprietary Schools'
12 Financial Trouble." And it goes into details
13 about some of these schools closing down and
14 leaving the students high and dry, so to
15 speak. That potentially the tuition
16 reimbursements account, which is funded
17 through assessments on these schools, unless
18 there was better oversight, that that would
19 be empty of the funds needed to repay the
20 students. It gave quite a few statistics.

21 And I'm curious, based on this audit,
22 what do you think you're going to be able to
23 do to fix the problem? Problems plural, I
24 guess.

1 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Sure.
2 Sure. So first and foremost, as soon as we
3 received the audit, obviously we went through
4 it. But even prior to that, there was some
5 work that was being done, acknowledging and
6 knowing that we had some systems issues that
7 needed to be addressed.

8 And with that, we responded. And
9 we've put certain -- certain, I would say,
10 systems key points in place in order to make
11 sure that not only are we responding to the
12 audit, we're responding to the issue of -- in
13 terms of proprietary. And I'm going to turn
14 it to Ceylane, because she's done a great
15 deal of work with our internal staff to
16 respond and to really create opportunities to
17 make sure that there is a better situation.

18 Ceylane?

19 NYSED DEP. COMMR. MEYERS-RUFF: Hi.
20 Hi, Senator.

21 So I think there's a couple of things.
22 One, actually only one school closed. So
23 there weren't a number of schools that
24 closed. And we have a pretty strong tuition

1 reimbursement account.

2 But to the Commissioner's point, we
3 were able to bring in some new staff and
4 they've done an analysis. And the
5 Comptroller's report really reinforces the
6 things that we found in our own analysis.

7 And so our next steps now, there's a
8 series of regulatory solutions and policies
9 and procedures that we'll be working on over
10 the next couple of months that really build
11 on the strong foundation that we already
12 have.

13 But we definitely recognize that in
14 the area of the financial viability, the
15 collection and use of data, and also as it
16 relates to inspection reporting, there's more
17 that we can be doing. And we plan to.

18 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: So we'll keep
19 looking. Because I -- you know, I've gotten
20 myself in trouble by saying proprietary
21 schools -- and some of them are very good,
22 and I have no problems with them. And some
23 of them are not very good. And then I do
24 have a problem.

1 it was -- if the question is only the
2 certificate programs?

3 NYSED DEP. COMM. MEYERS-RUFF: Yes,
4 my response would be the same.

5 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay, thank you.
6 That's all the time I need to take today.
7 Thank you very much.

8 Assembly.

9 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.
10 Then we'll go to Assemblyman Ra,
11 ranker, for five minutes.

12 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Thank you,
13 Chairwoman.

14 Commissioner, good afternoon. Good to
15 see you again.

16 So I have a question in an area that
17 relates to licensure. It does kind of get
18 into the healthcare area, but there's overlap
19 because of the licensure issue. And that's
20 the proposal with regard to telehealth and
21 licensure of people from, I guess,
22 surrounding states and the like.

23 Just in terms of -- obviously, it's
24 asking that the department would have to

1 promulgate regulations. But one of the
2 concerns that has been raised to me by some
3 doctors in the area is making sure that as
4 that happens, that there are scope of
5 practice rules that, you know, reflect --
6 New York scope of practice rules for -- for
7 similar professions.

8 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Right.
9 And that was a statement that I made earlier
10 that we have various concerns as well in
11 terms of the standards. You know, in the
12 contiguous states.

13 And we also have, you know, a concern
14 I think I mentioned about the implementation
15 date that is in the proposal, which is the
16 March 31, 2022. And I think Sarah was also
17 joining us at the time to add to that
18 conversation.

19 NYSED DEP. COMMR. BENSON: Thank you.
20 Can you hear me better now?

21 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Yes.

22 NYSED DEP. COMMR. BENSON: Oh, that's
23 good news.

24 Then I will say, with apologies, I

1 missed whatever you said before,
2 Commissioner, so I apologize if I'm repeating
3 things you've already mentioned.

4 But Assemblyman, one of the comments
5 you made is very astute, in that certainly
6 among professions there's a real concern that
7 the scope of practice is not necessarily
8 identical from state to state. In some cases
9 it is, but in other cases the New York scope
10 is slightly different. And any time you're
11 talking about bringing folks in to do similar
12 work, you want to make sure that they're
13 properly qualified to do so.

14 Obviously our primary goal is to
15 protect New Yorkers' health and safety and
16 wanting to make sure that those folks have
17 met all the same standards but also are
18 practicing within the scope the same as
19 New York licensees.

20 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Well, thank you for
21 that.

22 And then the other piece of it would
23 be what about the, you know, in-state
24 licensed professionals in New York State and

1 perhaps their ability to provide a telehealth
2 service to, say, a New Yorker who spends
3 their winter in Florida or South Carolina or
4 someplace like that.

5 NYSED DEP. COMMR. BENSON: You want me
6 to keep going, Commissioner?

7 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Sure.

8 NYSED DEP. COMMR. BENSON: So I think
9 the proposal in the Executive Budget is a
10 little light on details in terms of exactly
11 what's contemplated. You know, we certainly
12 would welcome additional conversation, and
13 we're happy to provide whatever technical
14 assistance we can to that.

15 Telehealth is something that was
16 widely used before the pandemic. Obviously
17 the pandemic, you know, put a spotlight
18 on it, and there's a lot of great advantage
19 to it. It is something that, you know, I
20 think as professions evolve, it's important
21 to provide alternatives to how people receive
22 their care. But it's got to be done in a
23 thoughtful and very, you know, methodical way
24 to ensure that they're getting the services

1 that they deserve.

2 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Well, thank you. I'm
3 glad these are things you're talking about
4 and contemplating as maybe getting more
5 detail into this and addressing some of those
6 issues, as well as stuff that I think is
7 somewhat outside out of your purview in terms
8 of, you know, audio-only services and, you
9 know, some sort of payment parity for these
10 services.

11 I've certainly seen -- my grandmother
12 is getting ready to get a hip replacement,
13 and my aunt who lives with her, thankfully,
14 has been trying to help her do the
15 preliminary appointments via telehealth,
16 which is a very foreign thing to her. She is
17 not a computer-savvy person by any extent.

18 So all of these things that maybe we
19 weren't even thinking about a year ago have
20 now become very important to providing equity
21 in services to people.

22 So thank you.

23 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

24 We go to the Senate now.

1 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

2 Senator Robert Jackson, three minutes.

3 SENATOR JACKSON: Wow. Three minutes.

4 Hey, everyone. Good afternoon,
5 Commissioner. My pleasure, always good to
6 see you.

7 I just have a couple of little things.
8 One, you know, I am really concerned about
9 the education budget and higher education
10 budget overall. And I don't think that
11 there's enough money in there. And so
12 obviously we're going to be looking at --
13 when I say "we," both the Assembly and
14 Senate, and even the Governor mentioned that
15 he is willing to consider raising taxes -- an
16 increase in taxes on the wealthiest
17 New Yorkers. So I'm hoping that we have
18 enough money from the federal government and
19 the State of New York in order to make sure
20 that everyone has an opportunity to get an
21 education, whether it's elementary or higher
22 education. That's extremely important.
23 Education is the key to uplift all families,
24 and we know that.

1 But obviously this is Black History
2 Month, and there are a couple of bills that
3 were passed in the Senate regarding diversity
4 and the lack of diversity. Can you tell me
5 what's happening overall in order to increase
6 diversity overall in the system as far as the
7 public school system and in higher education?
8 And more specifically, can you touch base as
9 far as the My Brother's Keeper program and
10 where are we at with that.

11 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Well, so
12 let me start, since you started with the
13 budget, I just want to make it known that
14 eliminating programs such as, for example,
15 Teachers of Tomorrow, or even a program like
16 the Teacher Mentor Internship Program, has an
17 effect. Any elimination of really having
18 teachers that, given what we know about the
19 pipeline -- and also leadership, but
20 particularly teachers -- if we're saying on
21 the one hand that we're having difficulty
22 creating a pipeline, creating a pipeline in
23 terms of diversity and then eliminating
24 programs that financially support increasing

1 the footprint, then that in itself is a mixed
2 message.

3 I think it's important when we look at
4 Teachers of Tomorrow that serve
5 low-performing districts, as you well know,
6 then these financial decisions are more
7 beyond financial, they're moral decisions
8 that have an impact.

9 The second question, you talked about
10 diversity. As we're looking at this, our
11 department has assigned and we're working
12 with various stakeholders and institutions
13 knowing the importance of our children having
14 the kind of a diverse workforce that
15 reflects -- you know, that they can look and
16 they can see staff in many cases that look
17 like them.

18 So diversity is critical. I mean, as
19 a matter of fact, this February we're going
20 to have a diversity discussion around
21 medical, which Sarah Benson has put together
22 along with the two cochairs in the medical
23 field.

24 And so it's not just the educational

1 field, but it's also the need to grow, the
2 need to have a much more accessible -- and
3 have opportunities. And when we financially
4 impede this growth, it clearly has an effect
5 and it reflects not only in the individuals
6 that will go into the profession, but also it
7 has an overarching effect.

8 I think eliminating these two key
9 programs, Teachers of Tomorrow, Teacher
10 Mentor Internship Program, is a concern that
11 we have voiced. And we continue to advocate
12 for the funding of these two programs, along
13 with other programs in terms of our
14 special-need students.

15 SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you,
16 Madam Commissioner. I just want to say to
17 you I'll be working with you and your staff
18 on that. I put forward, you know, the
19 Amistad Commission and others as far as, you
20 know, increasing diversity as far as
21 educators are concerned.

22 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Well, I
23 want you to know that the Amistad, we have
24 already -- along with our chancellor, we have

1 already started. I know that Jen Trowbridge
2 and others, Kim Wilkins and many of our
3 staff, Sharon Cates-Williams, we are already
4 looking at -- we actually did a -- had a
5 conversation with New Jersey in terms of how
6 they have advanced an internal conversation
7 around this issue.

8 We really clearly see the importance
9 of diversity as an equity issue for our
10 department, so --

11 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you,
12 Commissioner. Thank you, Senator Jackson.
13 Assembly.

14 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to
15 Assemblywoman Hyndman. Reset the clock to
16 three minutes, please.

17 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: I need all my
18 minutes. Thank you. Thank you, Chair
19 Weinstein. I was hoping we could bank
20 minutes for those members who didn't use all
21 their minutes, but --

22 (Laughter.)

23 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: Thank you very
24 much. I have a couple of questions here,

1 Commissioner -- I was about to call you
2 chancellor. Commissioner, if someone could
3 tell me how long, on average, does it take to
4 fill a position within SED, is my first
5 question.

6 The second question is of the
7 vacancies that you listed, how many of them
8 are Grade 18s, 22s, you know, 26s?

9 My third question is about the BPSS --
10 which you know is dear to me, I used to work
11 there -- audit. How many auditors are in the
12 investigations and audit unit of BPSS? Which
13 I think would have helped with that report
14 because you're not talking about people who
15 are -- love my colleagues. I'm just saying
16 if we had auditors, the report might have
17 been different.

18 And my last -- I think my last points
19 are in OQ, how many staff members are in OQ
20 and at different grade levels of OQ
21 employees, because of the time it takes to
22 evaluate -- receive programs, evaluate
23 programs? And what are the technology
24 hindrances in OQ to speed up the evaluations

1 of programs?

2 And the last thing, I just wanted to
3 comment on the pharmacists, the change of
4 practice. We just passed a bill that would
5 change -- allow pharmacists to administer the
6 COVID-19 vaccinations. When I know that
7 predominantly in my communities, communities
8 of color, sometimes a lot of people, their
9 pharmacists are the person they speak to and
10 so forth.

11 We're not asking pharmacists to
12 diagnose whether someone -- obviously, with
13 the COVID virus, they're giving vaccinations
14 to prevent.

15 I would really like us to explore --
16 this is probably the one area of the
17 Article VII language I actually agree with,
18 in that allowing pharmacists to give
19 vaccinations for adults.

20 I know we don't have enough time. I
21 would really appreciate the follow-up,
22 Commissioner, as I do in other hearings,
23 please. And congratulations,
24 Ms. Meyers-Ruff, on your appointment to

1 ACCESS.

2 Thank you.

3 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Okay.

4 Well, thank you. We will get all of your
5 questions -- we jotted them down, we will get
6 answers to that.

7 On the pharmacist issue, the objection
8 is not about the vaccination. So we just
9 want to be clear that it's in the other --
10 it's in the other statements that are part of
11 that. And we will definitely set up a
12 follow-up and make sure you have the
13 responses to all the requests and questions
14 around these staffing issues.

15 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: Thank you. I
16 look forward to the follow-up.

17 Thank you, Chair Weinstein. I'm done!

18 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: You got in
19 under the clock.

20 Assemblyman Epstein.

21 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Good afternoon,
22 Commissioner. Thank you for being here,
23 thank you for your time.

24 I have really just a simple question.

1 We've seen a lot of people who are looking at
2 colleges and really not being able to compare
3 apples to apples, really wanting more
4 information on disclosures, you know,
5 for-profit, nonprofit, public schools.

6 I'm wondering, why don't we have an
7 across-the-board disclosure that allows them
8 to compare all schools against each other.
9 So, you know, why is not every school on
10 their website saying, you know, in
11 relationship to costs, this is what they have
12 compared to -- why are we not making it
13 easier for the consumer or for the student to
14 be able to get that information?

15 Because people make choices all the
16 time -- like I go to a restaurant that's an A
17 because it's an A. I don't go to a C, you
18 know? We make it easy for consumers, but we
19 don't do that in the college arena.

20 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Okay, so
21 I'm going to turn it to Bill, but I will say
22 that there are -- that this information
23 obviously, as you know, resides -- there are
24 parents -- and I know, for example, as a

1 parent with my son, when we were looking at
2 colleges, obviously there are materials
3 and -- you know, and the difficulty, as you
4 said, is the accessibility for some
5 communities. Right? So that is -- that is a
6 concern that we share.

7 Bill, I'm going to turn that to you
8 because there are things that are available,
9 and we're more than glad to share with you
10 what they are.

11 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: So I'd be happy
12 to turn it over to Bill, but I'll also say
13 there are things that are available but are
14 very difficult for people to follow. And so
15 we're educated, we have advanced degrees, and
16 we can figure it out for our kids. But not
17 every parent has that experience, or every
18 child has. So we've seen a lot of people
19 going to for-profit schools because they're
20 local, but that's not the best economic
21 choice. We've seen people make financial aid
22 decisions that aren't the best because they
23 didn't really understand their options.

24 And we -- I would love to see a really

1 simple way of providing information across
2 schools to students that doesn't require them
3 to go through 15 different pages on some
4 federal website to figure it all out. Why
5 are we not, New York State, being a leader
6 and making it easy for people?

7 Go ahead, Bill.

8 NYSED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Go ahead
9 Bill.

10 NYSED DEP. COMMR. MURPHY: Thank you.
11 Thank you, Assemblyman. And I would love to
12 have conversations with your staff on that,
13 because we've already started to work with
14 folks in our information resources department
15 who collect all the data in our HED system,
16 our higher ed data system, and we have been
17 looking at updated technology.

18 Right now, you know, a lot of our
19 data -- you know, like you said, like we'll
20 have spreadsheets on there and we'll have the
21 basic numbers with enrollment and, you know,
22 outcomes with graduation. And I know that
23 there are some models at the federal level
24 where you can do a little bit of what you're

1 talking about, you know, to look at like a
2 report card that shows --

3 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: I've only got
4 5 seconds. So I would love to do that. I
5 have a bill that I'd love to sit down and
6 talk to you about. I know we've talked
7 before about it, and I'd love to kind of
8 continue this conversation.

9 NYS ED DEP. COMMR. MURPHY: Excellent.
10 Thank you.

11 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you.

12 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you. I
13 don't believe we have any other
14 Assemblymembers or Senators who have
15 questions. So I want to thank you,
16 Commissioner Rosa, for being here with us
17 today.

18 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Yes, thank you
19 and your team for all your work.

20 NYS ED INTERIM COMMR. ROSA: Thank you.
21 Thank you.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes. And now
23 we're going to go to the New York Higher
24 Education Services Corporation, HESC, and

1 Dr. Linares, president.

2 Guillermo Linares, are you there?

3 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Yes, I am
4 here.

5 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Hello, former
6 colleague. So you have 10 minutes to make a
7 presentation, and then there will be
8 questions. Don't feel compelled to use all
9 10 minutes.

10 (Laughter.)

11 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Okay. Good
12 afternoon, Chairs Krueger, Weinstein,
13 Stavisky, Glick, and to all my former
14 colleagues in the Senate and Assembly. Thank
15 you for the opportunity to speak today about
16 the Governor's 2021-2022 Executive Budget
17 recommendations that impact the New York
18 State Higher Education Services Corporation,
19 HESC.

20 I am Dr. Guillermo Linares, president
21 of HESC. And I'm joined this afternoon by my
22 executive vice president, Elsa Magee.

23 Before I begin, I would like to say
24 that at this time last year we had no sense

1 of the turmoil that was before us as a state
2 and a nation. It is good to see each of you
3 in good health. And while we know that
4 challenges remain, we have reason to be
5 hopeful, as more than 2 million New Yorkers
6 have received a vaccine and we move forward
7 towards getting a majority of New Yorkers
8 fully vaccinated.

9 Through 2020, New York State continued
10 its steadfast support for higher education
11 programs. HESC continued to administer more
12 than two dozen student financial aid and
13 college access programs that enabled
14 New Yorkers to reach their higher educational
15 goals, including the Tuition Assistance
16 Program (TAP), one of the nation's largest
17 need-based student financial aid grant
18 programs, and the Excelsior Scholarship,
19 which enabled nearly 230,000 New York
20 resident SUNY and CUNY students to attend
21 college tuition-free.

22 HESC annually receives more than a
23 half million applications for grants,
24 scholarships and loan forgiveness programs,

1 and annually awards more than \$1 billion in
2 financial aid to help over 330,000
3 college-going students and college graduates
4 pay for college. In its 50th Annual Survey
5 Report on State-Sponsored Student Financial
6 Aid, the National Association of State
7 Student Grant Aid Programs, NASSGAP, cites
8 New York State's need-based financial aid
9 expenditures exceeded that of every other
10 state in the nation.

11 The 2022 Executive Budget preserves
12 access to an affordable college degree and
13 protects this opportunity for students who
14 faced challenges presented by the pandemic.
15 The budget proposes to maintain student
16 financial aid and opportunity programs that
17 serve our neediest students and includes
18 legislation to hold harmless students who
19 were unable to complete academic requirements
20 needed to maintain financial aid eligibility
21 due to the coronavirus pandemic. The budget
22 extends financial aid award duration limits
23 for students who were unable to maintain
24 satisfactory academic progress requirements

1 due to the pandemic and releases previously
2 withheld payments to colleges.

3 In closing, under Governor Cuomo's
4 leadership, New York continues to lead the
5 nation in expanding access to a quality and
6 affordable college education. Funding for
7 higher education has increased by
8 \$1.5 billion -- that is 25 percent -- since
9 2012, from \$6 billion to \$7.5 billion in the
10 fiscal year 2022 Executive Budget.

11 This investment includes nearly
12 \$1.3 billion in fiscal year 2022 for
13 strategic programs to make college more
14 affordable and encourage the best and
15 brightest students to build their future in
16 New York.

17 The Governor's recommendations for
18 higher education continue to fund programs
19 that enable the neediest of New York's
20 students to pursue their educational goals
21 regardless of financial situation. HESC is
22 pleased to be an integral player in helping
23 New York's students, and our future leaders,
24 attain the economic and social benefits that

1 accompany a college degree.

2 Thank you for allowing me the
3 opportunity to present our testimony today.
4 I will be happy to answer any questions you
5 may have.

6 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.
7 Thank you, Guillermo.

8 We go to Assemblywoman Glick for
9 10 minutes.

10 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you very
11 much. Very happy to see you again, and hope
12 you and Elsa and everyone on the HESC staff
13 is well.

14 When you said that there has been some
15 extension for students who couldn't complete
16 their work, could you explain if that is an
17 extension of TAP and whether students are
18 getting one or two extra semesters of
19 coverage?

20 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: I want to
21 refer to the impact the pandemic had in the
22 previous year, 2020, on students. The
23 overwhelming majority of students were able
24 to complete both terms, the spring 2020 and

1 fall 2020 semester, primarily because of the
2 flexibility that was provided by both the
3 federal and the state Departments of
4 Education that allowed virtually all students
5 to be able to complete their requirements
6 that they had to complete their terms.

7 So that is something that I think
8 we're glad that we were able to accomplish,
9 given the extent of the pandemic.

10 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Well, I guess
11 I'd like to understand, while it may have
12 been the majority of students, I know that
13 there are students who, because of the
14 pandemic, found it impossible or difficult --
15 there were delays in getting devices to
16 students, they might have been in places
17 where they could not access properly all of
18 their courses due to WiFi limitations.

19 If they have had to, for example, drop
20 some courses, were they -- are they able to,
21 if they lost, in essence, part of a semester,
22 are they able to get -- instead of eight
23 semesters of GPA, will they be able to get
24 nine?

1 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: I can assure
2 you that what we wanted to make sure was that
3 in the context of the pandemic, the awards
4 that we offer all students that were impacted
5 by the pandemic, we wanted to make sure that
6 those would not be an impact on them given
7 the circumstances that came all of a sudden.

8 So we -- we know that there are
9 multiple circumstances impacting, but we can
10 say that students have -- we've been
11 responsive to students when they have been
12 impacted, and we want to make sure that
13 they're not penalized for any of those
14 circumstances as they relate to the pandemic.

15 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Okay. Well, I
16 don't know that I actually know whether
17 students have -- I mean, it's a numerical
18 question, and at some point perhaps somebody
19 on your staff can give me a numerical answer.

20 How many students have had
21 scholarships -- not just during the pandemic,
22 but in general -- each year, how many
23 students have their scholarships converted to
24 loans because they have not met the service

1 contract arrangements?

2 For example, in a STEM scholarship --
3 and this is not about the pandemic, but in a
4 STEM scholarship, the student gets the
5 scholarship if they graduate in the top 10
6 percent of their class. They pursue STEM in
7 college. They graduate, they want to return
8 to where they resided with their family, for
9 whatever reason, to a part of the state where
10 the STEM disciplines do not have the same
11 level of employment opportunity as some other
12 places or some other states.

13 How many students, in various
14 categories, including the STEM scholarship,
15 have had those scholarships turn into loans?

16 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: We'd be happy
17 to provide you with specific numbers.

18 But I want to assure you that
19 obviously whenever we invest, you know, in
20 our students, we want them to -- for them to
21 stay. Obviously this has become more
22 challenging with the pandemic now. But, you
23 know, fortunately we have provisions now
24 under the pandemic to address that.

1 But we are mindful that there will be
2 more difficulties in the labor force moving
3 forward. But we want to be able to provide
4 as much opportunity for our students to stay
5 here when they graduate. And we do -- we are
6 mindful that this is something that would
7 benefit our state moving forward.

8 Elsa, would you like to add anything
9 to my response?

10 HESC EXEC. VP MAGEE: I concur with
11 everything that you just shared, Dr. Linares.

12 I think what we found with the STEM
13 program in particular is that it was
14 established at a time where both I think the
15 federal and state Labor Departments had
16 identified that there was a significant
17 shortage of qualified workers to fill the
18 STEM jobs that were existing and were
19 projected to exist.

20 So I think, as Dr. Linares said, we
21 can certainly get you the specific numbers.
22 But, you know, again, pre-pandemic at least,
23 what we were finding was that there were not
24 significant numbers of individuals who were

1 struggling with finding jobs in a STEM field.
2 It was more what we were seeing were students
3 who started off thinking that they were going
4 to pursue STEM while in college, changed
5 majors, as many students do.

6 But we can certainly get you the
7 numbers, as Dr. Linares said.

8 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: I appreciate
9 that. I know that we received at least some
10 calls through other colleagues about students
11 who, particularly upstate, had difficulty and
12 were -- their parents, in fact, were the ones
13 who were shocked to find that something had
14 converted.

15 And we certainly don't want students
16 to decide, Well, the only -- I don't want it
17 to be a loan, but I can't, you know, get a
18 job here and if it's going to be a loan, then
19 I'm going to have to go, you know, to Boston
20 where I can get a job that's higher-paying in
21 that field. But we lose somebody out of the
22 state.

23 Do you run -- does HESC run programs
24 for financial aid counselors? I was

1 especially thinking about like high school
2 guidance counselors, who have a lot on their
3 plate. And I know that things may be
4 available on your website, but sometimes it's
5 easier for people to get that information in
6 a webinar-type thing. Are you running those?

7 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Yes, we are.
8 As a matter of fact, we just had a webinar
9 recently with regards to the DREAM Act.

10 But we are running webinars --
11 especially now that we have to work remotely,
12 we are utilizing all our efforts, whether
13 through the Department of Education to reach
14 high schools directly, and guidance
15 counselors, or the different districts that
16 we have across the state.

17 So it's a modality that we're using
18 now aggressively to do aggressive outreach,
19 and, you know, continue to be in contact with
20 our partners at the school level but also
21 with students and families.

22 Elsa, you want to add --

23 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: I'm not sure if
24 I have any time left, because I can't see the

1 time on --

2 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: 46 seconds.

3 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Okay. Well,
4 I'll come back at the end. Thank you.

5 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: You're welcome,
6 Deborah.

7 Next is Senate Higher Education Chair
8 Toby Stavisky.

9 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you,
10 Madam Chair.

11 And thank you, Dr. Linares and
12 Ms. Magee, for your insights. And thank you
13 for the job that you've been doing. I know
14 it's been difficult at times.

15 How has -- my first question concerns
16 the DREAM Act. How has the implementation
17 gone? And what kind of outreach are you
18 doing, with the privacy concerns and other
19 issues -- but how has it been going? Would
20 you discuss that?

21 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Absolutely,
22 with pleasure.

23 As you know, the DREAM Act was
24 approved by the Legislature in April of 2019.

1 We hit the ground running. We engaged
2 Dreamers and the networks of organizations
3 that work closely with them and with
4 immigrant communities across the state. By
5 July, we had the application open.

6 We wanted to make sure that we could
7 protect our Dreamers as well, so we worked
8 closely with the Department of Education on
9 that.

10 We had a great response. We worked
11 with both SUNY, CUNY, and private schools
12 across the state to do this. We had a great
13 response, and it's been a great rollout.
14 It's been highly successful.

15 And as I said earlier, as recently as
16 last -- December, we had a webinar with a
17 network of organizations that work closely
18 with Dreamers and immigrant communities to
19 make sure that we continue our efforts to do
20 outreach and engage Dreamers to participate
21 and take advantage of all the offerings that
22 we have.

23 So it's been very successful, the
24 rollout and the response that we've had and

1 the Dreamers that have been benefited from
2 this program so far.

3 You want to add anything, Elsa?

4 HESC EXEC. VP MAGEE: I don't want to
5 take up any additional time. But yeah, the
6 support that we've gotten from the
7 community-based organizations -- and we have
8 a team of people within the agency who are
9 really committed to the program and to
10 assisting the students -- has been great.

11 And then we also want to thank the
12 State Education Department, who we have
13 partnered with to ensure that Dreamers don't
14 have to provide as much documentation.
15 Beginning this past fall, SED is confirming
16 for us their high school status and, once
17 they've graduated from high school, that
18 they've graduated, so we don't really have to
19 ask them to upload documents any longer. And
20 we know that was an issue for students,
21 particularly in New York City during the
22 pandemic, trying to get some of the
23 credentials.

24 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

1 And I think that's especially
2 important, because as you know, I represent a
3 large immigrant community in Queens. And I
4 noticed a lot of the Asian-American kids are
5 leaving the state. And I said repeatedly
6 that I'd love to have them stay in New York.
7 Because I'm afraid when they go to California
8 or wherever they go, we're not going to get
9 them back so readily. So I appreciate that.

10 I was curious if you could provide us
11 with the demographics of who was receiving
12 the TAP awards, the Excelsior, the Enhanced
13 Tuition and the other programs that you --
14 I'm not asking for now, but if you would get
15 that to me, I think that would be interesting
16 question. Do you have such information?

17 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Sure. We'll
18 be glad to provide you information that we
19 have beyond what we have in Open New York and
20 also in our website with our annual reports.

21 We have it, we'll gladly share it with
22 you.

23 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you. And I'm
24 thinking about it in terms of how we can do

1 additional outreach to attract the
2 underrepresented in these categories.

3 Let me ask you one last question. On
4 the awards that you administer, TAP and
5 Excelsior and ETA, I understand that the
6 students will reply -- or apply, rather, and
7 many of them do not submit all of the
8 information and therefore they don't receive
9 the award.

10 What are the reasons? What are they
11 missing? Where are the deficiencies?

12 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Well, I want
13 to share with you that when it comes to
14 applications, particularly this year, we've
15 seen somewhat of a decline we attributed to
16 the pandemic. But this is not just here in
17 the State of New York, it's across the
18 country. So I wanted to convey that.

19 But we fully expect that once we get
20 from under this pandemic we will see the
21 number of applications to come back as they
22 are.

23 But Elsa, would you want to add
24 anything?

1 HESC EXEC. VP MAGEE: Yeah. Thank
2 you, Senator.

3 We would not just deny somebody for
4 failing to provide supporting documentation
5 that's required to determine their
6 eligibility. We do, for most of our newer
7 programs, the -- I would say since 2014,
8 definitely -- the programs, as they're
9 developed, they're automated. So once a
10 student submits an application, they
11 typically get an email that tells them the
12 documentation that they need to provide.

13 Sometimes they may think that they've
14 uploaded it, but we will send reminders. We
15 tend to wait months before we might think
16 that someone -- and they would have gotten
17 several reminders. They do have to make sure
18 that the email that they're providing is the
19 email that they're going to use going
20 forward. I think we're trying to work
21 through to do texting to probably help with
22 some of this.

23 When you're applying as a high school
24 student, you may have a Gmail address that

1 you use, but then when you go to college you
2 have to use your college email address, and
3 they may not be thinking about going back to
4 their Gmail address, but that's where we're
5 sending them notifications because that's all
6 that we had.

7 But we know that the students -- now,
8 especially, you keep your cellphone number.
9 So we're really actively looking now at
10 texting to try to address some of those
11 issues, because it does lengthen the process
12 to be able to determine their eligibility.

13 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you. Thank
14 you.

15 (Overtalk.)

16 SENATOR STAVISKY: Is there anything
17 you would like to add or -- because I have no
18 more questions.

19 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: So we'll go to
20 the Assembly, to Assemblyman Walczyk, ranker
21 on Higher Ed for five minutes. Thank you.

22 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Thanks so much.
23 I don't need the five minutes.

24 I'm just curious to know if you think

1 we should eliminate the Excelsior
2 Scholarship.

3 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Well, I
4 believe that the Excelsior Scholarship has
5 been a resounding success. I think just
6 looking at the 2019-2020 year, 32,000
7 students benefited from this program, meaning
8 that middle-class families did not have to
9 pay out-of-pocket or take a loan in order for
10 them to meet the tuition fees that students
11 have to pay.

12 So this has been also a program that
13 really sends a clear message that when you
14 attend school full-time, you save money and
15 you save time, which is very, very powerful
16 as a message. And you avoid having to borrow
17 money when you exhaust the financial aid that
18 you have.

19 So this is one of the big benefits
20 that I think a program like this offers. And
21 it's successful across the country whenever
22 it has been implemented.

23 So I'd say, if anything, we're looking
24 to expand the program moving forward so that

1 it benefits more students and more families
2 across the state.

3 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Wouldn't it just
4 be easier or we could -- I mean, we could
5 create an entirely new program to talk about
6 whatever other people that you want to serve.
7 And I can understand the merits of the
8 program, and you outlined some of them very
9 well, sir. Wouldn't it be easier to just
10 expand TAP instead of creating new programs
11 with new titles?

12 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Well, the
13 difference between TAP and this Excelsior is
14 again that TAP, you can exhaust the funding
15 that TAP offers and not fulfill the
16 completion that you have within the four
17 years. And then you're left having to either
18 borrow money or drop out, which is worse.

19 And this program sends a very clear
20 and strong message for students whose
21 families are unable to cover that money
22 unless they get it out-of-pocket or borrow
23 it. And the in-time completion is really
24 key. That's a big, big difference that I

1 see.

2 But, you know, the Legislature is open
3 to look and revisit TAP, which was
4 established 50 years ago. But this program
5 has already made a tremendous impact and
6 increased the benefits for students that
7 would otherwise not have it.

8 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: I appreciate
9 your time, sir. And I think it did send a
10 strong message. The message that was
11 received mostly in the phone calls to my
12 office were from higher education
13 institutions that were frustrated with an
14 entirely new program that they had to learn
15 and had, you know, changing rules, and with
16 middle-class families who were confused about
17 many of those rules that were changing by the
18 day.

19 But I think I've said my piece, and I
20 will yield back the extra minute and a half
21 of my time to the good chairwoman.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.
23 Appreciate it. We can go to the Senate.

24 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you. And I

1 will pass along not the extra time but the
2 microphone to Robert Jackson, three minutes.

3 Are you there, Robert?

4 SENATOR JACKSON: I'll take the
5 minutes and the time.

6 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Nope, you just
7 get the three minutes. You always go over.
8 I'm going to be strict this time.

9 SENATOR JACKSON: Oh, boy, don't be so
10 strict. I'm just trying to change my video.
11 Can you hear me, though?

12 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: We can hear you.

13 SENATOR JACKSON: Yes, okay. So
14 Dr. Guillermo Linares, let me thank you for
15 your leadership as the president of the
16 Higher Education Services Corp. Guillermo
17 and I go way back, and it's my pleasure and
18 honor to see him in the capacity that he's
19 in.

20 But I have concerns about the negative
21 impact this pandemic has had on the people
22 that we represent overall. And so can you
23 tell me, as far as -- you mentioned the
24 number of students that are part of the

1 Excelsior program. But can you -- if you
2 don't have it now, is it possible you can get
3 it down later, as far as can you break it
4 down by geographical areas and also the
5 diversity of the students that are enrolled
6 in the program, so that I can get a full
7 picture of who is it serving?

8 And I know it's serving students based
9 on a financial matter, but I would like to
10 see some statistics other than that --

11 UNIDENTIFIED STAFFER: Arnie's {ph}
12 looking for that, but he's going to send it
13 to me when he gets it.

14 SENATOR JACKSON: Yeah. So -- but
15 also, I just wanted to say that right now, so
16 you have -- you have more money to give out
17 to students as long as they qualify, is that
18 correct? Have you been negatively impacted
19 by the budget?

20 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: I think one
21 of the positive things that we've seen is
22 that, you know, the -- the education, higher
23 education budget has been kept whole, meaning
24 that we wanted to be able that in spite of

1 the pandemic that we face and also the
2 challenges, financial challenges the state
3 had, we have been able to keep financial aid
4 to students across the board in the state
5 whole.

6 And this is a commitment the Governor
7 has made and continues to make. And I think
8 that notwithstanding the challenges that we
9 have with being able to make sure that the
10 awards that were made, that have been made
11 are kept regardless of the circumstances of
12 the pandemic, to make sure that students, you
13 know, are able to keep afloat financially.
14 And I think that it's because we've made
15 higher education a top priority and make sure
16 that any impediments that came as a result of
17 the pandemic were being addressed.

18 And so we support students across the
19 state, and it's based on income --

20 SENATOR JACKSON: Dr. Linares, I'm
21 sorry, I just have -- I need to get this in
22 so you can then respond in writing.

23 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Yeah, sure.

24 SENATOR JACKSON: I would like to

1 know, regarding the pandemic, the negative
2 impact it's had on people that have dropped
3 out of school and now would have to pay back
4 money, or they graduated and they don't have
5 a job, as people said, so they may have to go
6 to another state.

7 Can you put those stats and send it to
8 us, if you don't mind? My time is up. And I
9 wish that I could give you more
10 opportunity --

11 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Happy to do
12 so.

13 SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you. Thank
14 you, Madam Chairs.

15 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Thank you.

16 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.
17 Assembly.

18 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to Ways
19 and Means ranker Ed Ra, for five minutes.

20 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Thank you, Chair.

21 Dr. Linares, always great to see a
22 former colleague before us in these days.

23 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Same here.

24 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: I hope you are well.

1 I just wanted to ask a question --
2 this is something we had spoken about briefly
3 last year. I know it's a relatively small
4 program, but it's regarding the Child Welfare
5 Workers Incentive Scholarship and the Child
6 Welfare Worker Loan Forgiveness Program.

7 Just in terms of (A) whether there was
8 any type of delay or withholding that that
9 program had been subject to during the past
10 year as -- you know, as there were these
11 temporary adjustments made to the budget.

12 And then (B) again, as I asked last
13 year, if you are able to get us information
14 about how many people are actually applying
15 to that program. Because it's something that
16 I would like to see in the long term
17 hopefully expanded. You know, people that
18 work in those settings -- that sector has had
19 a lot of trouble to begin with, and with the
20 pandemic, it's gotten even worse. And trying
21 to recruit people into that sector is very
22 important.

23 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Thank you for
24 the question.

1 You know, as with all our programs, we
2 have managed to maintain them whole, you
3 know, notwithstanding the challenges of the
4 pandemic. And obviously, going forward,
5 we -- we're able to proceed to address it
6 based on the funding that we receive approved
7 by the Legislature. But we have been able to
8 maintain this particular program, along with
9 all the others, whole during this pandemic.

10 Elsa, would you like to add anything?

11 HESC EXEC. VP MAGEE: For the loan
12 forgiveness program, Child Welfare Worker
13 Loan Forgiveness, we do have recipients for
14 five awards. So the program is fully
15 utilized there, as well as for the
16 scholarship.

17 Again, it's a \$50,000 appropriation
18 for the program. It's been fully utilized.
19 But my understanding is that the recipients
20 are attending graduate programs. So I
21 believe the number of recipients were either
22 two or three, to fully exhaust the -- the
23 allocation for the program.

24 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Okay, great. I mean,

1 that's great to hear that it's fully being
2 utilized.

3 Again, if it's possible to go back and
4 provide information as to, you know, how many
5 applications the agency does get or maybe has
6 gotten over the last few years. Just that
7 way, those of us in the Legislature, you
8 know, can look at what the demand is there
9 and perhaps consider expanding the number so
10 that there are more slots for people to be
11 awarded awards under that program.

12 Thank you.

13 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: We'll be
14 happy to do that.

15 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to the
16 Senate now.

17 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay, thank you.
18 I think I'm the last Senator, so to speak.

19 Actually, I think I'm starting where
20 my colleague Senator Jackson ended.

21 Can you give us a sense -- oh, will
22 you set the clock again, whoever is on clock?
23 I promise not to use my 10 minutes. Oh,
24 well, they'll get to it.

1 So people who -- probably related to
2 COVID, I would expect we would see an
3 increase in people who had to drop out of
4 their program or decided not to continue in
5 school for this year. But I'm wondering
6 whether you're already seeing an increase in
7 students defaulting on student loans. Or
8 would you expect that another year or two
9 down the line?

10 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: For now, we
11 realize the challenges that the pandemic
12 brings. But we do have built-in flexibility
13 and also the hardship provisions that have
14 been put together and authorized to look at
15 the extent of the pandemic, whether it is
16 job-related or interfering with students not
17 being able to continue their studies.

18 So we are mindful of the
19 circumstances, and we don't know how long
20 this impact will take. We're still in the
21 midst of it. But we do have those provisions
22 to look and examine the impact of -- that
23 this is having on students, to make sure that
24 they're -- at the end of the day, they're not

1 penalized for the disruption that the
2 pandemic has brought.

3 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: So I know we've
4 done moratoriums on rent payments and
5 utilities and a variety of other things. But
6 if I'm finished with my education but I have
7 a hefty student loan that I'm paying back, is
8 there something that happened at the federal
9 or state level to -- a moratorium on my
10 having to pay back my student loan now?

11 HESC EXEC. VP MAGEE: So --

12 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Yeah, go
13 ahead, Elsa.

14 HESC EXEC. VP MAGEE: So the federal
15 CARES Act provided relief for Federal Direct
16 Loan borrowers. HESC still has guaranties,
17 as do other state guaranty agencies. Pell
18 loan borrowers back -- I think it was in
19 2010, when all loans disbursed were disbursed
20 under the Federal Direct Loan Program.

21 But HESC voluntarily for -- on behalf
22 of New York State, we provided that same
23 moratorium for all of our borrowers. So from
24 last March till the end of December, there

1 were no payments, there were no adverse
2 collections activities, no interest accruing
3 on the balance of their loans, consistent
4 with what the federal government had offered.

5 We did the same thing -- I think
6 Dr. Linares was referring to students who had
7 scholarships that could have converted to
8 loans. We provided the same relief to those
9 students as well, and as well as anyone who
10 had a NYHELPS loan outstanding.

11 So as a state, we chose to provide
12 that relief. And we know that we worked with
13 the Department of Financial Services, who
14 works with the lenders when we don't own the
15 loan, to encourage lenders to provide similar
16 supports to students who were not in default
17 as well.

18 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: So that's great.
19 But I heard you say past tense that that
20 ended in December. So now are we making
21 people pay? Or have we continued that?

22 HESC EXEC. VP MAGEE: So what we have
23 done is rather than do this across the board,
24 because we do know that we have -- we know

1 our borrowers, that we have some borrowers
2 who have state, federal, local government
3 jobs that were not impacted. So what we're
4 doing is offering the same benefits to those
5 who need it. And those who were not impacted
6 healthwise or job wise by the pandemic will
7 be returning back to the payments that they
8 had.

9 If they're underemployed, again, we
10 are going to be touching each one of them to
11 provide the relief that they need. But --
12 and again, we're still extending the
13 zero-interest accrual for the first quarter
14 of the year.

15 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Great. And you
16 referenced the private loan authorizers, that
17 DFS is working to encourage them to do that.
18 So we can't make them do it. Do we know what
19 happened? Are people responding to our
20 request for them to do this voluntarily?

21 HESC EXEC. VP MAGEE: I think, again,
22 we've seen fewer purchases than we normally
23 would. So it seems that the lenders -- just
24 anecdotally, from what we're seeing, it seems

1 that lenders did provide relief. We can, you
2 know, again reach out to DFS to see if they
3 have more specific information.

4 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: That would be
5 very helpful, thank you.

6 And I'm going to cede my time back to
7 the Assembly chair.

8 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you. We
9 have a few additional members.

10 Harvey Epstein, three minutes.

11 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: I think -- I'm
12 sorry, am I on video now?

13 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes.

14 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you,
15 Dr. Linares. Good seeing you again.

16 Just building on Senator Krueger's
17 points, if there -- if people are defaulting,
18 traditionally the Attorney General's been
19 filing cases in Albany, which has been a huge
20 hardship for students who have to challenge
21 defaults. You know, we've talked to legal
22 services programs. Are you open to allowing
23 for people to be able to deal with those
24 cases, especially in the counties that they

1 live in?

2 And the Attorney General now is
3 appearing on those cases via Zoom anyway.
4 Would HESC be supportive of making it easier
5 for students to challenge those default
6 cases?

7 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: We do have
8 efforts to provide guidance and assistance
9 with regards to default. And this is part of
10 our efforts ongoing.

11 So any effort that we have to assist
12 those who fall in default or those who may
13 fall in default, and because, you know, of
14 our guidance and assistance do not default,
15 we're more than open to assist. But now with
16 the pandemic, it's even more urgent and
17 important because of the impact that it has
18 on families and economic --

19 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Doctor, I only
20 have three minutes, so I don't want to -- but
21 would HESC support the idea of allowing
22 students to appear in those cases in the
23 jurisdiction that they live? If you live in
24 Brooklyn, the case should be filed in

1 Brooklyn, not in Albany. Right now all the
2 cases are being filed in Albany.

3 Would you consider supporting that and
4 get back to me in writing about whether HESC
5 supports that idea?

6 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: We'll look
7 into it and get back to you.

8 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: That would be
9 great.

10 I know there's been -- there's
11 proposals to cut back on TAP. And there's a
12 huge population of people who don't get
13 access to TAP -- inmates. You know, we're
14 improving programs, the federal government
15 has now allowed federal dollars to go to
16 people who are incarcerated to attend school.

17 Would you consider allowing TAP to go
18 to inmates?

19 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Well, my
20 understanding is that the federal government
21 is now considering offering TAP to inmates --
22 Pell, that is. And it's something that has
23 not yet been authorized. I think it will be
24 good to see in the future when they do

1 authorize it, how they roll it out. And then
2 the Legislature could then proceed to look
3 and approve how we can --

4 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: So it would be
5 great to know where HESC is positioned on it.
6 I only have 5 seconds left to ask a quick
7 question. I'd love to see what is your
8 position, in writing.

9 Finally, is Excelsior -- I've heard
10 the success of it. I would love to expand it
11 for people who are part-time, people who have
12 additional needs. We've seen more students
13 going part-time because of the economic
14 crisis we're in. We'd love to be able to get
15 more students to get college degrees, and
16 Excelsior can help them.

17 We'd love to know if you'd be
18 supportive of Excelsior for part-time
19 students as well.

20 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Right now
21 it's a full-time program. There is some
22 statutes, so we -- we now see the success
23 that it has, but it's something to look into
24 by the Legislature in the future. But right

1 now it is an in-time-completion program, and
2 it's a huge success. So it's something that,
3 again, would have to be picked up by the
4 Legislature.

5 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you,
6 Chair. Sorry I went over. Thank you,
7 Doctor.

8 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Sure. Then we
9 go to Assemblywoman Hyndman.

10 Alicia, are you --

11 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: I'm here. I'm
12 just waiting for the prompts to come up on my
13 screen. Okay, thank you.

14 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: There you go.
15 Okay.

16 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: I'm here.
17 Thank you, Dr. Linares. It's always good to
18 see you and Ms. Magee. Thank you very much.

19 In regards to the Enhanced Tuition
20 Assistance Program, I know the Governor does
21 increase it, a \$1.50 million increase. But
22 how many students have been able to take
23 advantage of the ETA, have gotten access to
24 it?

1 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: We can
2 provide you the specific numbers. But we
3 know that a good number of students have been
4 able to benefit from the program, attending
5 private colleges and universities. So we can
6 could give you the specific numbers that we
7 have.

8 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: Yes, please,
9 I'd like that very much.

10 I don't believe -- you all don't
11 administer or have anything to do with
12 Bundy Aid; right?

13 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: No.

14 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: No, okay. All
15 right. Okay, thank you.

16 I yield back the balance of my time.

17 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

18 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Very quick,
19 Alicia.

20 We go to Assemblywoman Glick for her
21 seconds.

22 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you.

23 Dr. Linares, I know when Dr. Malatras
24 was on, he referred to the Excelsior program,

1 and you just did, as a completion program.
2 And I would suggest that when TAP was
3 created, it too was envisioned as a
4 completion program, in that the notion was
5 that you needed eight semesters in order to
6 complete your four years of school.

7 Life has changed, people have changed.
8 The top TAP income eligibility is 80 --

9 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Deborah, I
10 think it would be helpful if you shut off
11 your video, because your voice is off a bit,
12 breaking up.

13 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Okay. I will do
14 that. Is that a little better?

15 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Much better.

16 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Okay. Sorry.

17 So the top income eligibility for TAP
18 is \$80,000. The top Excelsior is \$125,000.
19 So in my humble opinion, it was intended to
20 reach a population that was more affluent,
21 where students would have perhaps more family
22 support and thereby be able to go full-time.

23 Whereas TAP students, who have a
24 moderate family income and have to work, are

1 getting maybe \$4,000 worth of support, but
2 these other families are getting a full
3 tuition remission of \$6500.

4 Is that just extending the income
5 inequality that we see in the state?

6 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Well, as you
7 are aware, TAP was started 50 years ago. It
8 was a different time. And as you said, many
9 things have changed. And, you know,
10 12 credits a semester when you are at the
11 eight semesters doesn't really get students
12 to the finish line. So it merits taking a
13 harder look, another look at TAP 50 years
14 later.

15 The idea of having a program like
16 Excelsior is to reinforce the importance of
17 attending full-time to the extent possible,
18 and also reaching students that would
19 otherwise have to go and borrow money or drop
20 out. So I think, again, this is something
21 that the Legislature, you know, could look
22 into and see how we can expand.

23 All in all, I say that because of TAP,
24 which is a top program for the nation, we

1 have so many students, especially low income,
2 benefiting from it.

3 Elsa, would you like to add anything?

4 HESC EXEC. VP MAGEE: No, thank you.

5 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Well, we can
6 take that up privately later.

7 I have one other question. I know
8 that you work with students who are in
9 default or on the verge of default and you
10 can work with them. But I'm wondering if
11 there is anything that prevents you from
12 informing students that there are
13 not-for-profits that provide one-on-one
14 counseling around student debt and, frankly,
15 other debt that they might have accrued as
16 they try to maintain their status as
17 students.

18 So is there anything statutorily that
19 prevents you -- in New York City, the
20 Community Service Society has a free debt
21 reduction program that targets students. But
22 students have more than just student debt,
23 they have other debt, and I think you only
24 focus on the student debt part of it.

1 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: I think we
2 look to work collaboratively with any entity
3 or any organizations in the state that
4 provides guidance and assistance to students
5 and New Yorkers. So we look to have
6 collaboration within the parameters with
7 which we operate.

8 Elsa, would you like to add anything?

9 HESC EXEC. VP MAGEE: The Department
10 of Financial Services -- I think several
11 years ago there was legislation that created
12 an office within that agency to also assist
13 with the type of student loan debt that HESC
14 does not have a direct relationship. So we
15 work with students whose loans we guaranteed,
16 but the Department of Financial Services, who
17 we do work closely with, has services
18 available to assist all student loan
19 borrowers as well.

20 There is right now a group where we
21 are working with them, along with other state
22 agencies, for that very purpose,
23 understanding that, you know, someone who's
24 struggling with finding a job and being able

1 to write a resume may also have student loan
2 debt and need assistance there, or someone
3 who's in a worker training program who's
4 looking to go back to work may be struggling
5 with other types of debt.

6 And we're in the process now of
7 looking at how we can have a one-stop shop
8 for New Yorkers for that very purpose.

9 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you very,
10 very much.

11 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.
12 Senate, right, we are finished?

13 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: I think we're
14 done here at the Senate side.

15 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Okay. So thank
16 you, Guillermo.

17 This is the end of the governmental
18 witness part, and we're going to be going now
19 to our panels. And we will be starting
20 with --

21 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Thank you.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: -- Panel A.

23 And just let me announce the order
24 will be, first, New York State United

1 Teachers, Andrew Pallotta, president. Then
2 Professional Staff Congress of CUNY,
3 Dr. Barbara Bowen, president. And then
4 United University Professions, UUP, Frederick
5 Kowal, Ph.D., president.

6 So if we can bring that panel up. I
7 think they are all here.

8 And just a reminder now to both this
9 panel, the panelists to come, and members,
10 that each member of the panel gets three
11 minutes to make a presentation. Please don't
12 read your written remarks, which were
13 previously distributed to all of the members
14 that are here, and those that aren't.

15 And then for the members, you get
16 three minutes to ask a question of the panel,
17 not each individual panelist. And please
18 leave time for them to respond to the
19 questions.

20 And with that, we go to Andrew for a
21 presentation.

22 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: And just before
23 you start, Andrew -- you know, Helene, I've
24 heard you say it a dozen times, but it's sort

1 of like speed dating. We're all
2 participating in speed dating this year.

3 So thank you very much for humoring us
4 with these short time windows.

5 MR. PALLOTTA: Thank you. Thank you,
6 and good afternoon, almost good evening.

7 And Chairpersons Krueger and Weinstein
8 and Stavisky and Glick, members of the
9 Legislature, I am Andy Pallotta. I'm the
10 president of New York State United Teachers.
11 We represent over 600,000 members around the
12 state. Thank you for this opportunity to
13 testify today on the proposed 2021-'22
14 budget.

15 My testimony represents the concerns
16 of over 80,000 faculty and professional staff
17 who work in public colleges and universities
18 across the state as well as the three SUNY
19 teaching hospitals. These include members of
20 the UUP, PSC and the faculty and staff at
21 nearly every community college throughout the
22 state.

23 I'm joined today by Dr. Fred Kowal and
24 Dr. Barbara Bowen, president of PSC. You

1 will hear from both of them in a few moments.

2 I want to talk about, quickly, the
3 financial devastation that has followed the
4 health crisis created by COVID-19. I cannot
5 imagine trying to craft a budget when your
6 starting point is 15 billion negative.

7 To make matters worse, you also must
8 grapple with an Executive Budget proposal
9 that is woefully inadequate. The proposed
10 2021-'22 Executive Budget presents many
11 challenges for public higher education.

12 Budgeting with the hope that we are
13 going to receive \$15 billion in federal money
14 is, to me, is like going shopping, on a
15 shopping spree, and holding an
16 unscratched-off scratch-off lottery ticket
17 and hoping for the best. This is really a
18 very difficult time for all of us.

19 The worst part for higher education is
20 the fact that even if we somehow do receive
21 15 billion from the federal government, the
22 budget as proposed is still woefully
23 inadequate. Without a significant windfall
24 from the federal government, SUNY and CUNY

1 stand to lose millions in critical
2 operational dollars -- specifically, SUNY,
3 46 million, and CUNY, 26.2.

4 Our community colleges, which have yet
5 to recover from having 20 percent of their
6 TAP dollars and 92 million in base aid
7 withheld in 2021, are left to contend with
8 the full-time equivalent student funding
9 methodology, which fails to insulate the
10 colleges from enrollment fluctuations.

11 Since COVID-19 has caused enrollment
12 numbers to decrease, these colleges stand to
13 lose an additional \$40 million. If we do not
14 address these issues, they will have very
15 difficult times returning when enrollment
16 reverses.

17 I am watching that clock. I believe
18 that we have other options, and that is
19 raising money from the ultrawealthy in this
20 state.

21 I want to thank each and every one of
22 you for all the work that you do, and I
23 cannot imagine us having success without this
24 process and the work that each and every

1 legislator does on our behalf.

2 So thank you for that, and going --
3 right now we'll go right to Dr. Kowal, I
4 believe.

5 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: I actually had
6 called on Barbara Bowen next, but --

7 MR. PALLOTTA: Okay.

8 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: So Barbara, why
9 don't you go next, so we --

10 MR. PALLOTTA: Thank you.

11 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Because that's
12 what the --

13 DR. BOWEN: I'd be delighted. Great.
14 Thank you. One second, please, just till I
15 get my -- okay, thank you.

16 Good afternoon, Chairpersons and
17 Honorable Members. Thank you for staying all
18 afternoon and for this opportunity to testify
19 also for your support for public higher
20 education.

21 I'm privileged to represent the 30,000
22 members of the PSC, the faculty and staff who
23 have up-ended our lives this year to keep
24 CUNY running for our students and for

1 New York.

2 The Governor's two budget scenarios,
3 one with a \$15 billion infusion of federal
4 aid and one with 6 billion, position a flat
5 budget as a victory. A flat budget would be
6 a defeat, for CUNY and for New York. For
7 CUNY, it would mean a return to overcrowded
8 classrooms, inadequate staffing, crumbling
9 buildings, layoffs of adjuncts, and
10 dangerously low student support. A return to
11 normal is not enough. Normal was killing
12 CUNY.

13 The actual Executive Budget, which
14 assumes 6 billion in federal support, would
15 be completely unsustainable. It would cut
16 programs, hurt students, and charge more in
17 tuition. The members of the PSC call on you
18 to reject the false choice between these two
19 scenarios.

20 There is an alternative, one not
21 envisioned in the Executive Budget or even
22 CUNY's own inadequate budget request. End
23 the tax breaks for the rich. The linchpin of
24 the fiscal year 2022 budget must be increased

1 revenue through fair taxation.

2 We urge you to pass the six revenue
3 bills supported by the Invest in Our New York
4 Coalition. You have a once-in-a-generation
5 chance -- and the support of 92 percent of
6 New Yorkers -- to fix this problem. Aim
7 high.

8 Investment in CUNY cannot wait until a
9 better budget year. CUNY has an unmatched
10 ability to help working-class and poor New
11 Yorkers rebuild their lives. That's exactly
12 the ability that is needed now. Hollowing
13 out the public sector has been literally
14 fatal. Anything less than enacting real
15 revenue increases this year will sabotage
16 economic recovery and reinscribe the
17 inequities of race and class the pandemic
18 laid bare.

19 The PSC asks you to reject all cuts to
20 CUNY in the Executive Budget. Undo the
21 damage to CUNY's current allocation through
22 silent cuts and wage freezes. Ensure that
23 CUNY uses the federal funds it has already
24 received to protect students and reverse

1 layoffs. And join us in embracing visionary
2 new legislation that will be introduced
3 tomorrow, the New Deal for CUNY.

4 The New Deal for CUNY demonstrates
5 that there is a compelling and fiscally sound
6 path to making CUNY tuition-free while at the
7 same time restoring staffing and student
8 support to the level students need. The PSC
9 seeks the initial year's funding in fiscal
10 '22. We ask you, use your position in
11 government as courageously as the original
12 New Deal reformers used theirs. Whether we
13 are in government or not, we get only a few
14 chances in a lifetime to change history, and
15 this may be one of them. The PSC urges you
16 to take it.

17 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Three minutes
18 on the dot.

19 Dr. Kowal?

20 DR. KOWAL: Thank you, Chairpersons
21 Weinstein, Krueger, Stavisky and Glick, and
22 distinguished members of the Senate and
23 Assembly. Thank you for inviting United
24 University Professions to testify on the

1 '21-'22 Executive Budget for higher
2 education.

3 My name is Dr. Frederick Kowal, and as
4 president of UUP it is my honor to represent
5 more than 37,000 academic and professional
6 faculty at SUNY.

7 I want to begin by thanking you for
8 your unwavering support for SUNY and the work
9 our members do.

10 This year's Executive Budget does not
11 offer this kind of support. At best, the
12 budget will be flat. At worst, it will lead
13 to a cut of \$46 million. Cutting SUNY is
14 shortsighted and ill-advised, as campuses are
15 already facing this year's 5 percent cut
16 occurring this spring.

17 You don't cut your way out of an
18 economic depression. You take bold steps to
19 invest in essential public services such as
20 SUNY, a proven economic engine, to bounce
21 back.

22 And these cuts are compounded by the
23 continued withholding of negotiated salary
24 increases to all state employees, along with

1 the lack of any hazard pay to the employees
2 of SUNY hospitals, who have spent the last
3 year saving lives. This is unconscionable.

4 Much has been made about the federal
5 assistance that may well be coming. This
6 assistance is of crucial importance to our
7 state, our university, and our members.
8 However, let us be clear. This assistance
9 will not rescue the state's economy or
10 overcome the decade of austerity funding that
11 has caused great harm to SUNY. The federal
12 assistance is triage. It is not recovery.

13 For a full recovery, we need
14 progressive taxes fueling massive investments
15 in all institutional infrastructure --
16 healthcare, education and green energy. The
17 federal support will help us, but true
18 recovery depends on us.

19 There are a number of untapped revenue
20 streams that, if approved by the Legislature
21 and signed by the Governor, could bring in
22 tens of billions of dollars in new revenue.
23 New York could be placed on solid financial
24 footing with the passage of a combination of

1 revenue raisers which target the mega-rich,
2 who have added to their fortunes each day
3 during the COVID pandemic. The resources
4 raised would be crucial in carrying out the
5 ambitious agenda that SUNY, our students and
6 our state deserve.

7 UUP is proposing such an ambitious
8 program in NY HEALS, a wide-ranging
9 legislative proposal that would expand
10 services to address basic healthcare needs as
11 well as the crisis in maternal mortality
12 among African-Americans, provide support to
13 hire diverse, full-time tenure-track faculty
14 and staff, double the funding for opportunity
15 programs, and fund innovative approaches so
16 that SUNY can take the lead in creating a
17 sustainable path forward for the state.

18 If there was ever a time when we need
19 healing, it is now. We must address the
20 worsening crises we face together, and SUNY
21 can and must lead.

22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

24 So we're going to go to some

1 questions. A reminder to members and
2 Senators that it is three minutes to ask
3 questions of the panel, for both the question
4 and the answer.

5 We go to Assemblymember Glick first.

6 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Yeah, let me ask
7 just a couple of questions.

8 Obviously I understand that the
9 position of all of the panel is that we need
10 to dramatically increase the number of
11 dollars that we receive. I'm going to set
12 that argument aside and ask a couple of
13 specific questions.

14 For Barbara, we've gotten mixed
15 information on how many adjuncts have been
16 rehired and then how many are actually
17 needed, based on the fact that there is a
18 lower number of students participating -- I
19 don't know if that's accurate or not.

20 The second part is that there's been
21 professional development regarding the online
22 teaching, and I'm wondering if that's in fact
23 your experience.

24 DR. BOWEN: Thank you. Thank you for

1 asking, and I'll be quick.

2 On the question about the adjuncts,
3 the best information we have is that
4 initially last spring, before even drops in
5 enrollment -- and that's important --
6 2,990 adjuncts were laid off. Before the
7 enrollment for the coming fall was even
8 clear.

9 Thanks to the efforts of the
10 department chairs, the union, solidarity
11 among full-timers and part-timers, and the
12 pressure that we put on CUNY so that they
13 would use grant money to hire back adjuncts,
14 about a thousand were reinstated.

15 But even with that, there is still a
16 need for the work they do. All the research
17 shows that online classes, which is what
18 we're in now, need to be smaller than regular
19 classes, because students don't succeed
20 unless they have a small class in the online
21 setting. So there should in fact be more
22 classes, and smaller classes.

23 Instead, what CUNY has done -- in one
24 department, for example, English at John Jay,

1 they cut 20 percent of their courses this
2 term. All the department chairs of Brooklyn
3 College were initially told to raise the
4 maximum number needed and therefore cut
5 courses.

6 These adjuncts are desperately needed,
7 and 422 were put off health insurance.

8 Professional development, yes, CUNY
9 has been doing that. It's woefully
10 underpaid, and not everybody who's been
11 taking that opportunity has received their
12 proper payment. So it is very inadequate.

13 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: All right. I
14 only have a moment left. And I apologize,
15 just to maintain my bandwidth, I don't have
16 my video on.

17 Fred, I'm just wondering about the --
18 with the 5 percent cut this year and, going
19 forward, a \$46 million cut, how many job
20 losses do you anticipate? And was this
21 accomplished by encouraging people to retire
22 or just the general attrition? That's for
23 Fred.

24 DR. KOWAL: For the fall semester,

1 what we saw was mostly attrition that took
2 place. And also SUNY was using reserve
3 funds.

4 But we are already hearing for the
5 spring -- for instance, at Cortland College,
6 50 adjuncts have been informed that they will
7 not be back in the spring. We are hearing
8 similar things at the University at Albany,
9 Binghamton and Stony Brook, at the University
10 Centers, which tend to be in the best
11 financial shape.

12 So there's no way of projecting what
13 will occur. We're curious about what's
14 happening with the funding, the federal
15 funding that was passed late in the year. We
16 know specifically Cortland got \$9 million or
17 is due to get \$9 million of that. So we will
18 need to be tracking that federal funding to
19 ensure our workers, our members are
20 protected.

21 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

22 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you very
23 much.

24 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Time is up.

1 We'll go to the Senate.

2 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

3 We'll go to Toby Stavisky, Higher
4 Education chair.

5 You're on mute, Toby. Take your mute
6 off.

7 SENATOR STAVISKY: Sorry.

8 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: That's okay.

9 SENATOR STAVISKY: Sorry, I forget. I
10 need a class in this. But then again, the
11 adjunct -- no.

12 (Laughter.)

13 SENATOR STAVISKY: Barbara, I'd like
14 to ask Barbara and Fred each a question.

15 Barbara, obviously we all notice that
16 the maintenance of effort was not included in
17 the Governor's budget. What's going to
18 happen as a result?

19 DR. BOWEN: There needs to be a
20 maintenance of effort. And that should be a
21 floor. For the Governor's budget not even to
22 be talking about maintaining past effort,
23 we -- also, to close the TAP gap. We didn't
24 talk about that in our oral testimony, but

1 there's almost \$80 million in TAP gap, which
2 is a structural deficit at CUNY. A similar
3 amount at SUNY. That's not even included.

4 And CUNY's budget request doesn't even
5 call for the mandatory cost increases for
6 fringe benefits and collectively bargained
7 increases. That's a terrible mistake,
8 because it builds in a deficit which will be
9 taken out elsewhere.

10 So maintenance of effort should be a
11 beginning, but we need much more than that.
12 I think our point from both of us is that
13 this is a time when we need to step up and do
14 more investment, not just hold the line.

15 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

16 Fred, may I ask you about campus
17 safety and the importance of not only testing
18 but inoculating all of the healthcare
19 workers. And would you -- the third point --
20 well, those are the three ones. Would you
21 comment on how this has affected your
22 members?

23 DR. KOWAL: Yes. And as quickly as
24 possible, Senator.

1 What I will say, in terms of the
2 maintenance of effort, I think the way I see
3 it, and not to be sarcastic, but it's almost
4 been a maintenance of insufficient effort,
5 especially in the proposed budget for this
6 year.

7 As Barbara was saying, there's no
8 funding to cover the negotiated salary
9 increases. There also, in the case of SUNY,
10 there is not the mission-critical funding for
11 the SUNY hospitals. Which, as you heard the
12 chancellor so eloquently say this morning,
13 have been on the front lines of the pandemic.

14 We also -- in terms of the security
15 question that you talked about, the safety,
16 not only is it a case where there is a
17 shortage of vaccines at the hospitals, like
18 at Upstate, and so everyone is not getting
19 vaccinated who literally is working with
20 patients.

21 The other, you know, extremely serious
22 situation is our professional staff working
23 in residential life, working in admissions,
24 working in counseling services, are not

1 included in Category 1b. They can't get
2 vaccinated, and they are dealing with
3 students on a day in and day out basis.

4 It's unconscionable. The chancellor
5 and I have argued for their inclusion. But I
6 will tell you, I get emails daily from irate
7 members who are terrified, as they work with
8 students, that they're going to get infected
9 because they can't get vaccinated.

10 SENATOR STAVISKY: The fact that we
11 have the four medical schools and the three
12 hospitals, has that been helpful in any way?

13 DR. KOWAL: Yes, it has. It
14 definitely has been helpful, certainly in the
15 development of the testing protocols at
16 Upstate. It has also been helpful in the
17 ways that those members who are working at
18 hospitals have been able really to educate
19 the rest of us about the level of the crisis
20 that we're facing. But they really need to
21 get that hazardous duty pay, because that is
22 an unconscionable situation.

23 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you. And
24 please thank your members for what they do --

1 DR. KOWAL: I will.

2 SENATOR STAVISKY: -- all of NYSUT.

3 DR. BOWEN: Thank you.

4 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

5 We go to Assemblyman Epstein, three
6 minutes.

7 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you, and
8 thank you all. The mantra is tax the rich to
9 fund our schools.

10 So I want to know the impact of this,
11 like, the killing of CUNY and SUNY. What is
12 the impact going to have to other students
13 who are attending these schools? And do you
14 think that's the reason we've seen a
15 declining enrollment over the last year?

16 DR. BOWEN: Yes, absolutely. And just
17 to give you one statistic, there's a recent
18 report by the Center for an Urban Future that
19 shows that in New York City 64 percent of
20 white residents have a bachelor's degree or
21 higher, 27 percent of black residents, and
22 20 percent of Latino residents.

23 I mean, that gap is a disgrace. And
24 it's there, in part -- I mean, it's systemic

1 and it will take more, much more than fixing
2 CUNY funding to fix it. But fixing CUNY
3 funding would go a long way, because the most
4 marginal students are the ones who are hurt
5 the most in any kind of cut.

6 A lot of our students didn't have any
7 devices to take an online class. We've had
8 students who say, in their classroom,
9 Professor, I'm standing here in the closet in
10 my apartment because it's the only quiet
11 place. Or I have to get off this iPad now,
12 because we have one device for everybody and
13 there's five people in this apartment.

14 I mean, those students were heroic to
15 get to college in the first place. And now
16 there's just obstacle after obstacle. So
17 CUNY should be keeping faculty right there to
18 help them, and providing the resources. And
19 the state needs to do that investment if
20 there's any seriousness at all about an
21 economic recovery that is more than just
22 amplifying the wealth of the rich.

23 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you. And
24 I know I only have a minute left, but I'd

1 love to hear what people feel is like CUNY
2 and SUNY's role in the green economy and how
3 CUNY and SUNY can play leaders in this -- you
4 know, when we have potentially millions if
5 not billions of dollars going into that. And
6 Andrew or Frederick?

7 DR. KOWAL: Yeah. What I will say is
8 in -- and you've gotten a copy of our written
9 testimony where we outlined the extensive
10 proposals we're making on SUNY taking the
11 lead on the green transformation.

12 I was encouraged to hear the
13 chancellor. It sounded like he was endorsing
14 one of our ideas, to have a program across
15 campuses and centralizing the focus on this
16 transformation that needs to occur.

17 I think it's imperative that SUNY
18 takes the lead -- not just because 40 percent
19 of --

20 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: I know we only
21 have 30 seconds left, if Andrew wants to add
22 anything. I'm sorry, we're kind of short on
23 time.

24 MR. PALLOTTA: Thank you. I can go

1 back to the enrollment issue, right, that you
2 spoke about. So the fluctuations in how the
3 state funds the community colleges really is
4 going to hurt them.

5 So right now, yes, there's a decline.
6 But that will go back up, and we want to make
7 sure that those institutions are vital and
8 ready for the students when they come back.

9 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you all.
10 Tax the rich, fund our schools. Thank you.

11 MR. PALLOTTA: Thank you.

12 DR. BOWEN: Thanks, Harvey.

13 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to the
14 Senate. I believe we have no more
15 Assemblymembers.

16 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Oh, wow. That's
17 a new --

18 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Oh, now, we do
19 have one, so we'll come back.

20 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: -- challenging.
21 So I saw Senator John Liu first.

22 SENATOR LIU: Well, I know I'm
23 unmuted, but I'm just trying to get the video
24 going. There we go.

1 Hello.

2 DR. BOWEN: Hello.

3 SENATOR LIU: It's great, always, to
4 see our professor leaders here in our CUNY.

5 I asked our CUNY chancellor earlier
6 and, you know, I suppose the chancellors are
7 to some extent under gag order from the big
8 dog, so I didn't press the issue. But I
9 would like to ask all of you -- and I'll
10 direct it to Barbara first, right. Because
11 like every year we're sitting here trying to
12 figure out how to deal with budget cuts,
13 budget deficits, trying to fund the TAP gap,
14 trying not to raise tuition on students, all
15 sorts of preserving programs that cost
16 millions of dollars, when in fact we should
17 be looking at billions. Right? Billions of
18 dollars of investment for CUNY specifically.

19 There's the story of how in the Great
20 Depression -- well, not the Great Depression,
21 but economic -- the economic recession of the
22 1970s saw a huge investment in CUNY. A new
23 campus, I believe, right?

24 DR. BOWEN: In the thirties, in the

1 Depression.

2 SENATOR LIU: That was the Great
3 Depression, almost a hundred --

4 DR. BOWEN: Three new campuses.

5 SENATOR LIU: Right. That seems to be
6 what we should be doing now, really changing
7 the paradigm for higher education, which I've
8 argued it shouldn't even be higher education,
9 it should just be education, because I don't
10 think college, at least at the undergraduate
11 level, is a -- I don't think it's an optional
12 item anymore for the vast majority of people.

13 So we are -- there are a number of us,
14 and I know Assemblymember Epstein is
15 certainly part of it, Senator Jackson I'm
16 sure will talk about it as well. We want to
17 change the model, we want to raise a lot of
18 revenue. I tried to ask the chancellor what
19 they would do if we had the revenue, but
20 there was no answer. So to me it seems like,
21 you know, there's a gag order or there's just
22 really no vision other than the day-to-day
23 trying to balance and plug the budget
24 deficits.

1 What should be the vision? And I
2 would say the vision should be a return to,
3 you know, free tuition, the establishment of
4 a couple of new campuses. And, you know,
5 like funding the faculty fully, which not
6 only includes bringing back adjuncts but also
7 providing funding so that many of those
8 adjuncts can be full-time professors.

9 So that's the kind of vision that I
10 would have expected to hear about, but I
11 didn't. I'm sure --

12 DR. BOWEN: Now we only have nine
13 seconds, so -- and it's not nearly enough.

14 SENATOR LIU: Maybe you can go a
15 little longer, just because there aren't that
16 many --

17 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: No, no, no.
18 You can't use all your time to make a
19 statement and then say, What do you think?

20 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Helene is right.
21 You're going to get a response from them
22 afterwards, either in writing or verbally,
23 however they would like.

24 DR. BOWEN: Okay. I can't wait.

1 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

2 Thank you, Senator, for understanding.

3 We're going to go to Assemblywoman
4 Simon.

5 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: Thank you.

6 Thank you for this panel. You're
7 always people I like to hear from at these
8 hearings, because you make sense and are very
9 direct. So I want to thank you all for your
10 testimony.

11 And, you know, particularly I think
12 Barbara -- and Fred to a lesser extent,
13 perhaps -- you know, we've seen these cuts
14 that are being supported by declining
15 enrollment. And that declining enrollment in
16 some respects is a factor of COVID and the
17 impacts of COVID. And, you know, I don't
18 believe for a minute that we are going to
19 continue to have those decreased enrollments,
20 which are being used as evidence to support
21 various cuts.

22 I'm curious whether you guys have
23 estimates of the likelihood of that
24 stabilizing or, you know, increases in

1 enrollment, number one.

2 And number two, one of my colleagues
3 has a bill that I'm a sponsor of, and it's a
4 WPA for New York. And I'm curious whether
5 you're familiar with that bill and what your
6 thinking is about having a WPA effort in
7 New York State.

8 DR. BOWEN: That's great. Fred, you
9 want to start?

10 DR. KOWAL: You go ahead.

11 DR. BOWEN: Okay. I love the idea of
12 a WPA for New York State. And in fact a lot
13 of the work of the original WPA was obscured
14 by Robert Moses, who wanted to obscure the
15 role of the federal government. So there
16 needs to be a recovery of that.

17 But yes. I mean, our proposal, a
18 New Deal for CUNY, which gets launched
19 tomorrow, is in that tradition. Absolutely.

20 Enrollments will rebound. I mean,
21 enrollments -- they're not down at every
22 college. As we've seen, some -- somewhat of
23 the trend in lower enrollments in community
24 colleges is national, not local. We also

1 have President Biden with a plan for free
2 community college tuition. And our proposal,
3 New Deal for CUNY, would reinstate free
4 tuition across CUNY at all levels.

5 Enrollment would definitely go up if
6 that happened, because -- and you know this.
7 I know you've said this. Even with TAP and
8 other support, there are so many other costs
9 that students have and so many other
10 barriers. Free tuition lifts those.

11 So absolutely, enrollment will
12 rebound. And it will also rebound if the
13 services are there for students. I mean,
14 it's sort of self-reinforcing, if you deplete
15 the ranks of faculty and our counseling
16 staff, mental health staff, then of course
17 students don't stay. Rebuild those ranks,
18 students will stay.

19 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: Thank you.

20 DR. KOWAL: And in terms of SUNY --
21 I'll use the remaining 18 seconds. In terms
22 of SUNY, we face a slightly different set of
23 circumstances because of demographic shifts.
24 There may be a slight rebound in the next

1 year, but we know that going forward into the
2 twenties there is going to be a diminished
3 number of students graduating from high
4 school in upstate.

5 We draw -- in SUNY, 57 percent of the
6 students come from the five boroughs and
7 Long Island, and so there's more and more
8 competition over one geographic area. So
9 that's why we're embracing very aggressive
10 new programs to attract students, including
11 students from out of state, which I think is
12 going to be vitally important.

13 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: Thank you.

14 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

15 We go to the Senate.

16 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

17 Senator Robert Jackson, for three
18 minutes and zero seconds.

19 SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you.

20 Thank you, everyone. So let me just
21 thank you for coming in and presenting what
22 you have to say about the state budget.

23 I'd like to know how many people have
24 been laid off or not hired, both at NYSUT,

1 Barbara at PSC, and Fred at UUP. How many
2 people have been laid off in the past year?

3 DR. BOWEN: I'll start, and then -- at
4 CUNY the net layoff of adjuncts was about
5 2,000. There was initially about 2,900, and
6 we were able to bring some back. But net,
7 about 2,000. That's a huge number out of the
8 adjuncts. That's a huge workforce laid off.

9 Less visible, but very important, is
10 that CUNY's also down 500 full-time
11 positions, faculty and staff, because of
12 hiring freezes. So the number of full-time
13 faculty has shrunk, and staff, because of
14 hiring freezes. So we are really being hit
15 hard even before official cuts --

16 SENATOR JACKSON: I've got to move,
17 because I'm limited in time.

18 Fred, can you give me what numbers, if
19 you have it, as the president of UUP?

20 DR. KOWAL: What we've had so far,
21 Senator, is we can track about 1,000 lost
22 lines within SUNY. However, we are not
23 aware -- that is not 1,000 people who were
24 laid off or retrenched. It was a couple of

1 hundred that were.

2 But what we're seeing, different from
3 CUNY, is the wave coming this spring and
4 especially this coming fall unless we get the
5 funding we need.

6 SENATOR JACKSON: Sure. And NYSUT
7 overall, as far as educators?

8 Pallotta? Oh, you're muted.

9 MR. PALLOTTA: Barbara got hit the
10 hardest, and then of course Fred spoke of
11 his.

12 It's a small number in the community
13 colleges, but what they're looking at now is
14 33 million that they would be reduced by
15 because of the reduction in enrollment. So
16 they're looking at a very difficult future --

17 SENATOR JACKSON: And I know we're
18 talking about higher education, but as far as
19 teachers overall, around the state, how many?

20 MR. PALLOTTA: With teachers, we're
21 talking probably, total picture, about 3,000,
22 including the adjuncts from PSC.

23 SENATOR JACKSON: So if we don't get
24 the money that we need from the feds, which

1 is at least 15 billion -- and people say that
2 we're going to have to raise taxes ourselves.
3 You would all agree that if that doesn't
4 happen, there's going to be thousands more
5 layoffs around the state?

6 MR. PALLOTTA: Thousands of layoffs.
7 Just the way we had it back in 2009, where we
8 lost 30,000 educators.

9 SENATOR JACKSON: I just wanted to
10 paint the picture of what happened and what
11 will happen if we don't get the funds. And
12 obviously I agree with the six bills, Invest
13 in New York. And people -- I've been reading
14 an article by Errol Louis in the New York
15 Daily News saying that tax hikes, that just
16 won't deliver.

17 I disagree with him. We have to make
18 it work. And I think that we have to be
19 smart about it. So I look forward to working
20 with all of you in trying to make sure that
21 we raise revenues --

22 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Senator Jackson,
23 You're 12 seconds over. Thank you.

24 And thank you, all you panelists, very

1 much.

2 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We have
3 Assemblywoman --

4 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Oh, excuse me,
5 one more. Excuse me.

6 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yeah, one more.
7 Assemblywoman Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn.

8 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BICHOTTE HERMELYN: Yes.
9 Hi, thank you so much, all of you, for being
10 here.

11 (Inaudible.) -- fans and a great
12 supporter. And I wanted to probably yield my
13 time to John Liu's question. But before
14 that, just quickly, I just want to note that
15 I do support the invest in New York
16 Coalition. I think that's a great way for us
17 to raise revenue.

18 I also have a bill on free community
19 college, so I hope Biden adopts my bill.

20 (Laughter.)

21 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BICHOTTE HERMELYN: But
22 as you talk about all of these things that we
23 face every year -- TAP gap, faculties not
24 being fully funded, maintenance of effort,

1 tuition increase, programs being cut -- what
2 is the plan? Especially when our facilities
3 are not being utilized. And it seems as if
4 we're going to be maintaining a remote
5 learning, how creative can we get with
6 funding, leasing buildings and so forth? But
7 you have two minutes. Please address what
8 Senator John Liu had asked. Thank you.

9 DR. BOWEN: Okay. Thank you. And
10 thanks for your support for people who need
11 it very badly. So thank you so much.

12 There's so much. And when you talked
13 about creativity, I want to start there.
14 There is such a lack of imagination in this
15 critical moment about what could be done and
16 what a resource CUNY could be.

17 I mean, for one thing, the City of
18 New York should hire CUNY students to go door
19 to door and help people get appointments for
20 vaccines, those who are eligible, and then
21 take them there when their time has come.
22 That's just one simple idea.

23 But in terms of John Liu's question,
24 the New Deal for CUNY is a start on that, and

1 it's a New Deal that would increase the
2 number of full-time faculty at CUNY by 5,000.
3 It would have a special mandate to increase
4 the diversity, the racial and ethnic
5 diversity of faculty; to make New York a
6 national leader in labor standards -- it's
7 disgraceful the labor standards in higher ed
8 as an industry where we have thousands of
9 people paid unacceptable wages in
10 unacceptable conditions. New York should be
11 a leader and mandate that that can be no
12 more.

13 It would increase the number of mental
14 health counselors, academic advisors, and
15 make all tuition free. But I would go beyond
16 that. New Deal for CUNY is just a start.
17 With 4 billion from John Liu, we would make
18 the pay competitive for once. We would
19 double the number of faculty. We would have
20 beautiful libraries.

21 Nothing is too good for our students.
22 They should have beauty everywhere they are.
23 They should have beautiful labs, they should
24 have facilities in every community college.

1 They should have the kind of attention that I
2 have seen in the private universities where
3 I've taught, where students don't drop out
4 and they don't fail, because they have
5 somebody supporting them 100 percent of the
6 time.

7 If there were the political will to do
8 that at CUNY, we could do it. We know how to
9 do it. And it's a question of whether
10 New York State wants these students to fail
11 or wants them to thrive. And we want them to
12 thrive. But it's time that we change that
13 agenda, which right now looks like an agenda
14 that wants them to fail.

15 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BICHOTTE HERMELYN:

16 Thank you.

17 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

18 I believe we do not have any other
19 members or Senators. So I just want to join
20 my colleagues who have thanked you for being
21 here, but also thank your members for all
22 they've been able to do during -- under very
23 trying circumstances.

24 So thank you for being here. I'm sure

1 we look forward to hearing some responses.

2 And we're going to move on to Panel B,
3 which is two individuals, the CUNY University
4 Student Senate, Jovanine --

5 MS. PIQUANT: Juvanie Piquant.

6 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Juvanie
7 Piquant, thank you. I should look at the
8 list before I try and read. But after
9 six and a half, approaching seven hours, it's
10 getting a little -- your eyes get a little
11 tired.

12 MS. PIQUANT: That's why the students
13 should go first.

14 (Laughter.)

15 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Maybe next
16 year.

17 And then the State University of
18 New York Student Assembly, Brad Hershenson,
19 president.

20 So we will start with CUNY and then go
21 on to SUNY.

22 MS. PIQUANT: Good afternoon --

23 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Let me just --
24 before you start, I just want to say we have

1 your written testimony. It's been
2 distributed to everybody. Use your three
3 minutes to highlight your most important
4 points, and there may be some questions from
5 some members.

6 Now you can go, please.

7 MS. PIQUANT: Good afternoon, members
8 of the committee. My name is Juvanie
9 Piquant. I serve as chairperson of the CUNY
10 University Student Senate, which is the
11 student governing body of 500,000 students
12 across all 25 CUNY campuses. I'm a
13 third-year student at New York City of
14 Technology, majoring in law and paralegal
15 studies.

16 Today we are here because of the
17 constant austerity budgets that we've
18 constantly had in the City University of
19 New York due to the constant disinvestment in
20 public higher education. The Executive
21 Budget that the Governor proposes, proposes
22 an authorization of an extension of
23 predictable tuition hikes. Tuition hikes are
24 not predictable, nor rational. For the next

1 five years, we cannot be balancing the
2 budgets on the backs of our students.

3 The majority of our students have a
4 household income of \$30,000. The majority of
5 them are facing housing and food insecurity.
6 But it's not just that. Those students are
7 Black and Brown students in the City
8 University of New York who are detrimentally
9 being affected by the constant disinvestment.

10 How did we get here? We didn't get to
11 this point in CUNY because of the
12 coronavirus. We got here because of years of
13 constant, systematic disinvestment to our
14 university, constant cuts to opportunity
15 programs. And raising tuition on the backs
16 of students is not a form of sustainable
17 revenue, as we can see as it stands.

18 And how do we go to a more efficient
19 university? We must be able to understand
20 the concept of raising new revenue. And when
21 we raise revenue, what does that mean? That
22 means that we will be able to provide the
23 services and invest in the City University of
24 New York, invest in closing the TAP gap,

1 invest in not just only stopping tuition
2 hikes but never looking at tuition as a way
3 to increase revenue.

4 We must expand opportunity programs,
5 and we must expand TAP. We have something
6 called the TAP gap at our institution that is
7 still eating out of our budgets, and we also
8 now have an Excelsior gap. And the Excelsior
9 Scholarship does not necessarily help our
10 students, the majority of our students.

11 And in the times of crisis, we have
12 seen this nationally, in the federal
13 government, we have seen this in New York
14 State. We must look at a way for us to
15 reimagine higher education in New York. We
16 must set the example to leading forces across
17 the country of what higher education could
18 be. We must think in a concept of a New
19 Deal. We must think in a concept of how do
20 we re-innovate what does education mean for
21 us.

22 We cannot operate in the concept of
23 education being a luxury, but education and
24 public higher education should be a right.

1 Not just for one particular student, but it
2 should be a right for all students.
3 Regardless of zip code, socioeconomic status
4 or background, gender or race, higher
5 education should be accessible to all.

6 And these are the stories of not just
7 me, but many CUNY students. Last week I was
8 diagnosed with the coronavirus, and I also
9 lost my grandfather last week. But it is
10 important to show up to continuously fight
11 for our students, to understand it is up to
12 this Legislature to decide whether they will
13 be investing in public higher education, and
14 be investing in this institution that will
15 give students opportunity and accessibility
16 in New York City and across the world.

17 Thank you.

18 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you. And
19 hopefully you have a speedy recovery, and
20 condolences on your loss.

21 Brad, you're up.

22 MR. HERSHENSON: Thank you.

23 Juvanie, you're a tough act to follow.

24 Good afternoon, everyone. My name is

1 Brad Hershenson, and I'm a graduate student
2 at the University at Albany. I am privileged
3 and honored to serve as the president of the
4 Student Assembly, the recognized student
5 government representing the 64 campuses of
6 SUNY.

7 Right now we must invest in SUNY.
8 Graduates of SUNY are likely to work and live
9 in New York and continue to stimulate local
10 and state economies through employment and
11 taxes. In fact, 80 percent of graduates
12 remain in New York.

13 With issues such as the TAP gap, it's
14 not a gap anymore that we're talking about.
15 At tens of millions of dollars, we're talking
16 about a canyon. This has forced our
17 institutions to balance their budgets on the
18 backs of their own students.

19 We need resources to invest in the
20 services and programs -- such as mental
21 health counseling, food pantries, protecting
22 and enhancing EOP, academic advisement,
23 gender and sexuality, and disability
24 resources.

1 Earlier this morning the chancellor
2 made reference to the Middle Earth Peer
3 Assistance Program, which operates a mental
4 health hotline. This is a program run by my
5 home campus, the University at Albany, and
6 it's advertised to all students in the entire
7 SUNY system. However, the students
8 themselves pick up the slack where the state
9 support falls short. Students, through their
10 student activity fees, put forward hundreds
11 of thousands of dollars to support this
12 program alone.

13 And the same goes for services such as
14 the offering of kosher and halal meals, and
15 other areas where the campuses just can't
16 afford to do during a pandemic -- in part,
17 based on increased base expenses.

18 We need to also expand the promise of
19 programs such as the Excelsior Scholarship.

20 What is needed now are measures to
21 incorporate support for the real costs
22 associated with pursuing a degree -- housing,
23 food, transportation, textbooks, equipment,
24 internet access -- which could maybe be a

1 capital investment, closing the digital
2 divide. These are all financial stresses of
3 students, otherwise known as backdoor
4 tuition. I know my fellow graduate students
5 who are forced to pay back their wages would
6 concur.

7 President Biden supports free tuition
8 at our community colleges. We need to stop
9 relying on tuition increases on our campuses.
10 State officials need to stop claiming that
11 New York is a free-tuition advocate while
12 simultaneously proposing that SUNY and CUNY
13 be authorized to raise tuition yet again.

14 I must put forward the notion of
15 equity for the student voices at SUNY. Our
16 organization has been financially starved for
17 decades, and we only hope to be treated the
18 same as the CUNY students who have been
19 granted stability of funding and
20 representation through their own
21 constituency.

22 Right now, right in this exact moment,
23 we are truly at a crossroads. We need the
24 Legislature to put the blinking red lights on

1 tuition increases and move SUNY down a new
2 pathway, one that supports students and does
3 not increase tuition during a pandemic. It's
4 time we recognize our collective
5 responsibility to offer a world-class
6 education at an affordable cost to all.

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.
8 Thank you so much for being here.

9 We have a number of members who have
10 some questions, comments. We go first to
11 Assemblymember Glick, our Higher Ed chair.

12 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Good afternoon.
13 I apologize for not having my video on. I
14 actually like to put it on, but it does seem
15 to interfere. I just want you to know I'm
16 actually a disembodied voice. But it does
17 seem to interfere with my bandwidth
18 connection.

19 Juvanie, first of all, I hope that you
20 feel better soon, and I'm very sorry for your
21 recent loss.

22 I don't disagree that we have
23 increased tuition at an unsustainable rate.
24 But I'm wondering whether the students by and

1 large, if we were to stop increasing tuition,
2 what would be the top things that the
3 students would want us to ensure in terms
4 of -- is it smaller class size, is it
5 expanded services beyond the classroom, is it
6 library hours, technology assistance? What
7 are the things -- because, you know, we're
8 going to have to figure out the money.

9 So what are the top student needs?

10 MS. PIQUANT: I would say obviously
11 all that you've mentioned, because those
12 services are the ones that help us get
13 through our collegiate journey. Thus I would
14 say food and housing insecurity, mental
15 health services. Those are fundamental core
16 things that we need for us to be able to
17 carry out our duties as students. If we are
18 hungry, if we don't have stable roofs over
19 our heads, if we don't have anyone to speak
20 to when we're going through times of trauma,
21 we will be unable to perform or even in fact
22 be a student.

23 A majority of the time, that's what's
24 causing us to drop out and to leave, because

1 we do not have the support to carry us
2 through. It is not that we cannot handle the
3 academic rigor, because we are CUNY students
4 and we will show up in exemplary measures all
5 the time. But we need the support services
6 to help us sustain ourselves.

7 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you.

8 Brad?

9 MR. HERSHENSON: Sure. Just to echo,
10 I have to echo my colleague's remarks.
11 Mental health services are really key.
12 Disability resources as well are a major
13 point, and food insecurity. I think we
14 really would like to see more investment in
15 these areas, specific training for faculty on
16 the area of disability services and
17 accommodations for students.

18 But I think it's more than just
19 funding the services that are important to
20 students, it's funding those other ideas such
21 as the TAP gap or the increased base
22 expenses. Because without funding faculty
23 salary contracts, when we have a 3 percent
24 increase, students end up asking questions

1 like, well, why is the library open at
2 8 o'clock when last year it was open at
3 midnight?

4 So we need to fund the increased base
5 expenses that the campuses have to pay;
6 otherwise, we don't have those services.

7 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Okay, thank you.

8 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

9 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: I'm with you.
10 You know, I went when it was free -- at least
11 I started when it was free. I couldn't
12 finish free.

13 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Senate, do you
14 have --

15 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: I think Toby
16 Stavisky, our Higher Ed chair. I'm trying to
17 see if she does.

18 SENATOR STAVISKY: Yes, and I'm
19 unmuted.

20 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: She does, okay.

21 SENATOR STAVISKY: We've all been
22 unmuted in many ways today.

23 Juvanie, I'm sorry about your
24 grandfather, and I hope you feel better soon.

1 Real quick, if you remember a year and
2 a half ago when I held hearings all over the
3 state, I had the president of the college
4 first and I had the students second.
5 Because, quite frankly, you are our clients.

6 Really, one comment. When they
7 increase the tuition in this irrational
8 tuition -- excuse me, the rational tuition
9 policy was enacted, they did it because they
10 were going to have smaller class sizes and
11 additional faculty. My real question to both
12 of you is how has the online remote learning
13 affected the students?

14 MS. PIQUANT: It's been very
15 different. And it is no secret we are not
16 receiving the same delivery mode of teaching
17 that we should be. And yes, we have faculty
18 who are doing all that they can to combat
19 these times and to give us our education in
20 the ways that they can, but it is not the
21 same.

22 And you still have Zoom classes that
23 are extensively in large numbers. And the
24 mechanism, for example, of using the raised

1 hand option, trying to have classroom dialog,
2 becomes extensively difficult. Now your
3 professor has to click the Zoom screen and
4 click the arrow to make sure did I hear
5 something, do I see you, connection issues --
6 it all becomes a barrier in us receiving our
7 education virtually.

8 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

9 Brad, would you like to respond?

10 MR. HERSHENSON: Sure. I think what
11 we've seen is, front and center, the digital
12 divide. And we've seen a greater emphasis
13 and a need for graduate students to be
14 involved in virtual course instruction. In a
15 lot of cases, graduate students are on the
16 back end of course delivery, and we've seen
17 students working many hours to address some
18 of the concerns of students.

19 We've seen different software programs
20 that make students take a camera and
21 literally walk around their room to make sure
22 they're not cheating or there's no one else
23 in the room with them. So it really shows
24 the digital divide and how different students

1 may not have the same resources as one
2 another to operate in this environment.

3 SENATOR STAVISKY: You notice --
4 {inaudible} -- we're doing a lot of Zoom
5 also.

6 Is there anything either of you would
7 like to comment on what the college
8 chancellors have said?

9 MS. PIQUANT: I know -- I believe it
10 was Senator John Liu who asked about would,
11 you know, he do in terms of if we had an
12 extra couple of -- \$4 billion. I just want
13 to take the time to stress I have been a
14 student leader in CUNY, I have testified in
15 countless hearings.

16 SENATOR STAVISKY: Mine included.

17 MS. PIQUANT: It's been years and
18 years of the same dance. And I think -- we
19 are in the midst of a pandemic. It is up to
20 this Legislature to decide if we are going to
21 put public higher education as a priority,
22 not forget about us after we come to the
23 hearings. These are real stories, real
24 students who are going through hardships, and

1 we have the ability to change their lives.
2 We have the ability to make a difference in
3 New York State and be a leading example in
4 higher education. And it is up to us, in the
5 midst of this crisis, for us to figure out
6 how will we reimagine New York. That starts
7 with investing in CUNY and in higher
8 education.

9 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

10 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

11 So we're going to go to Assemblyman
12 Ra, three minutes.

13 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Thank you,
14 Chairwoman.

15 Thank you both for being here.

16 Always one of my favorite groups to
17 come before us. I was a student government
18 person back in my college days. In fact, I
19 met my wife through student government. I
20 held the position my junior year that she had
21 held her junior year -- she was a year older
22 than me -- and she had to train me in
23 everything, and that's how we met.

24 So thank you for your advocacy on

1 behalf of your fellow students.

2 Really this goes along the same lines
3 as what the chairwoman was just asking about,
4 and that's, you know, what your experience
5 has been in the last year. You know, not
6 just in terms of classes themselves, but, you
7 know, all those support services that you're
8 used to getting as you're going through
9 school. You know, career counseling,
10 tutoring, all those different things. Have
11 you been able to access those? What has your
12 experience been, both things that you still
13 can access in-person, or things you're
14 accessing virtually?

15 MS. PIQUANT: I would say the digital
16 divide has, as my colleague mentioned, Brad,
17 has caused rifts, and it makes it a bit
18 harder. For example, reaching out to the
19 financial aid office or the bursar's office,
20 it's much harder to connect with them because
21 you're not on campus. You can't just go and
22 wait in front of the bursar's office, now you
23 have to send an email.

24 Some students who are new, you have

1 the freshmen who don't necessarily know how
2 to navigate or know exactly where things are
3 digitally on the website, or they may not
4 know this is who I have to reach out to, it
5 can create some barriers.

6 And we have seen, of course -- there
7 has been some telecounseling, there have been
8 efforts to have online support services for
9 us. But then again, it is not enough and it
10 needs to be more. Because there are some
11 people who are falling in the cracks, and
12 those students who are falling in the cracks,
13 how do we help them up to speed.

14 MR. HERSHENSON: On our end, I think,
15 you know, it really all adds up. Those
16 mental health counseling services and the
17 food pantries and veterans' services, I mean,
18 it really is part of the student picture and
19 it helps students graduate successfully and
20 on time.

21 I think some services translate
22 virtually in ways that other services don't.
23 For example, gender and sexuality resources
24 are a big concern for students. And if a

1 student is not out to their parents or their
2 family, maybe they rely on that in-person
3 environment where they can be comfortable and
4 want to be who they are on campus. But in a
5 virtual environment, that can be tough.

6 So in that area, we really like to see
7 more investment on these services. And we
8 see it as an investment in the State of
9 New York. We're the taxpayers, we're going
10 to end up living in New York paying property
11 tax and income tax and frequenting the local
12 businesses. So this is all part of the
13 picture, the greater picture of investment in
14 the State of New York. And we'll be here for
15 decades to pay back that return on investment
16 for as long as we're living here.

17 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Right. Thank you
18 both. Keep up the good work. Be well.

19 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

20 Now we move to Assemblyman Epstein.

21 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Actually, we have
22 Senator Liu who snuck in as well.

23 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Okay. So let's
24 go to the Senate.

1 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay, thank you.

2 Senator John Liu to ask questions.

3 SENATOR LIU: I didn't realize I snuck
4 in. All I did was press the "raise hand"
5 button.

6 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: I know. But I
7 saw that.

8 SENATOR LIU: I thought I'd do this
9 quick before I get excoriated by our chairs
10 again for exceeding my time.

11 First, it's nice to hear from
12 Assemblymember Ed Ra that he was well-trained
13 by his wife. Congratulations, Ed.

14 (Laughter.)

15 SENATOR LIU: Always great to see our
16 student leaders. Nice to see you, Juvanie.
17 I'm sorry about your granddad. I hope you
18 get better soon.

19 And Brad, I was wondering if you might
20 know Assemblymember Seawright. I was just
21 wondering, but -- well, you don't have to
22 answer that.

23 And like Ed, I was also active on
24 campus. In fact, back in the day when I was

1 a student, which was a long time ago, it was
2 called the Student Association of the State
3 University of New York, SASU. It's a
4 different name now, but that was the
5 statewide student association for all of SUNY
6 students -- all the campus student
7 associations.

8 In any event, yeah, I mean, we're
9 talking about trying to raise a lot of
10 revenue. And we know what we would do with
11 \$4 billion for the public school system all
12 throughout the state, and that is really to
13 fulfill what the courts mandated the State of
14 New York do a long time ago, more than a
15 dozen years ago, through a court mandate.

16 And every year I've commented that
17 higher education, meaning SUNY and CUNY, they
18 kind of take a back seat to what we're trying
19 to do to fulfill the Campaign for Fiscal
20 Equity mandate for what's called lower
21 education. You know, everything through high
22 school.

23 Well, if we had \$4 billion? And, you
24 know, it's hard to try to fight for that if

1 no one can even say what they will use it
2 for. We know we could get \$150 million to
3 fund the TAP gap. We know, you know, there's
4 probably a collection of another \$50 million
5 to \$80 million to restore all the programs.
6 But how much would free tuition cost? Right?
7 I mean, we're talking probably a billion
8 dollars there. What additional expansions of
9 CUNY, like we had seen in the 1970s fiscal
10 crisis, could we embark on now?

11 I'm sure you have ideas. But, you
12 know, if you want to answer them now, great.
13 If not, you know, just think about it. But
14 it would be helpful for me personally to know
15 what could we do with \$4 billion -- or three,
16 or maybe five -- if we get that additional
17 revenue and devote it to CUNY and possibly
18 SUNY as well?

19 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: You have
20 23 seconds. Just John took a long time to
21 ask the question.

22 SENATOR LIU: Don't you want
23 \$4 billion?

24 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: I think they're

1 going to put -- they're going to send you in
2 writing some comments.

3 MS. PIQUANT: We'll definitely reach
4 out to you. You'll be hearing from us. We
5 will let you know all about the need.

6 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

8 So we go to Assemblyman Epstein.

9 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: I also want to
10 know what you want to do with \$4 billion.
11 You can tell me that later too.

12 Again, Juvanie, just -- I'm sorry for
13 your loss. You guys are -- both of you are
14 amazing leaders, and I look forward to all
15 the work you're going to do to improve all of
16 the lives of all New Yorkers.

17 I'd love to kind of humanize the story
18 a bit, because I think this is -- we all know
19 we need to tax the rich and fund our schools.
20 But stories -- like I don't think we know --
21 we don't hear enough stories of students who
22 had to drop out or students who've had family
23 issues or students who've had to struggle or
24 how the cuts are going to impact. Because

1 they're just like, there are cuts, and these
2 are theoretical things.

3 Is there a way that you could help us
4 humanize like this person went to this school
5 and this is what happened and now this is why
6 they can't continue their education? Those
7 stories will really help us as we push
8 internally, as you guys push externally, for
9 more funding for CUNY and SUNY to, you know,
10 end the TAP gap and really have a program.

11 So can you guys commit to helping us
12 with those stories and getting that
13 information out so we can have those?

14 MS. PIQUANT: Yes. And I would say
15 also -- we can definitely get you the
16 stories. But also, if this committee should
17 have more hearings to hear more of the
18 stories, and more opportunities to hear not
19 just only from myself and Brad, but other
20 students that we represent to hear from us, I
21 think having more hearings also can be an
22 effective way as well.

23 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Well -- and I
24 think we'd be happy to do that. I know with

1 Senator Stavisky's hearings that we traveled,
2 I was with her for many of those hearings,
3 traveling around the state. I think I would
4 be supportive of whatever hearing the Senate
5 or the Assembly Higher Ed chairs wanted to
6 have, to have these conversations, because I
7 think we need to hear more about this
8 disinvestment impacting our students.

9 You know, students with disabilities,
10 big issue. What's the funding cuts looking
11 like? And the food insecurity and housing
12 insecurity. Can you tell us what you're
13 hearing from students in the last minute that
14 we have?

15 MS. PIQUANT: Well, I'll keep it short
16 and then Brad can take it on.

17 I would say students with
18 disabilities, the digital divide is creating
19 barriers in terms of them having the
20 accessible resources they need to receive
21 proper instruction virtually. And we do have
22 food insecurity, for example, which is a
23 prominent issue. But we have seen the
24 chancellor share out and say that students

1 will be able to go to any food pantry,
2 despite that being your campus.

3 But I think we need more sustainable
4 ways of running our food pantries and making
5 sure they're stocked up and ready to go. And
6 also mental health services is a very, very
7 important thing that needs to be expanded,
8 and time is of the essence and it's extremely
9 urgent that we get on it now.

10 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Brad,
11 20 seconds?

12 MR. HERSHENSON: Sure. We will
13 definitely follow up with testimonies of
14 students and share the stories of students.

15 On the disability side of things, it's
16 tough for students. And it's tough to adapt
17 to Zoom and Webex and all the different types
18 of virtual platforms. It's tough when
19 someone's wearing a mask and you need to be
20 able to read lips. If your lips are covered,
21 it's very tough. Students need to have
22 colors and certain font sizes, where faculty
23 need to accommodate for that. And in some
24 instances, it's very tough for students.

1 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

2 We actually will have some student
3 leaders later talking about disability issues
4 and higher education.

5 So now we got up to Assemblywoman
6 Seawright.

7 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: Thank you,
8 Chairwoman Weinstein, and Chair Krueger.

9 And Brad and Juvanie, you've provided
10 very good testimony today. I want to direct
11 my questions to Juvanie. And my sympathy on
12 the loss of your grandfather, and best wishes
13 as you yourself recover from COVID.

14 So I just have two quick questions,
15 Juvanie. What is CUNY doing to extend
16 telecounseling programs?

17 MS. PIQUANT: In terms of
18 telecounseling programs, we know that they've
19 had some funding to expand. That expansion
20 is seen directly in the fingertips of our
21 students -- we still haven't seen it, and we
22 are in February.

23 And as you probably heard me mention
24 before, time is of the essence. We do see

1 that there is virtual counseling, some
2 campuses having them, but to the extensive
3 point as it should be, allotted to help meet
4 the demand of how many students are needing
5 to receive mental health services.

6 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: Okay. And
7 can you just tell me, how do you fund your
8 organization?

9 MS. PIQUANT: So the University
10 Student Senate is funded by a student
11 activity fee, which is they pay \$1.45 in
12 terms of going -- every student pays \$1.45
13 into our organization. That money is used
14 for us to carry out our advocacy measures.
15 And last year, last year's administration
16 actually gave over \$100,000 back into the
17 pockets of the students in terms of
18 scholarships and many other ways to help
19 execute our advocacy measures.

20 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: And how long
21 has CUNY had that fee?

22 MS. PIQUANT: That fee has been there
23 since the 1970s. It was suspended but then
24 reinstated.

1 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: Great.
2 Okay, thank you. And best wishes to you with
3 your studies. I expect one day to see you as
4 the first CUNY United States Supreme Court
5 justice. So good luck with your pre-law
6 studies.

7 MS. PIQUANT: Thank you.

8 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: Thank you
9 both.

10 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you. And
11 the last Assemblymember to address the panel
12 is Assemblywoman Hyndman.

13 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: Hi. Thank
14 you. Brad, the former Assemblywoman didn't
15 ask you any questions. I wonder why.

16 Juvanie, it's always good to see you.
17 And as you've testified, I've noticed that
18 there's more strength in your presentation.
19 So I'm just excited for your future.

20 MS. PIQUANT: Thank you.

21 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: My question is
22 this. I am -- I was a -- when I was at SUNY
23 New Paltz, I was an undocumented student.
24 And so my question is -- and I remember being

1 afraid to ask too many questions for fear of
2 someone finding out my status and reporting
3 me.

4 So my question is for undocumented
5 students, particularly in SUNY and CUNY, what
6 avenues do they have now, being that we're in
7 COVID and dealing with remote learning and,
8 you know, wanting services or having food
9 insecurities and not being able to meet their
10 needs? How are your student bodies able to
11 help them?

12 MS. PIQUANT: Well, I think -- I'm not
13 only going to speak for the University
14 Student Senate but many student government
15 organizations across CUNY. They do a really
16 good job in terms of connecting with
17 students. And obviously we know the nuanced
18 way of students being afraid to ask for help
19 despite their status.

20 And I think it's important the student
21 governments do a really good job in creating
22 safe spaces, virtual events. You know, John
23 Jay College of Criminal Justice, their
24 student government organization created --

1 had like an undocumented-allied training just
2 to share how we can create more safe spaces
3 for our students.

4 But obviously we do know the digital
5 divide does make people hesitant. Without
6 seeing a poster in the hallway, students may
7 be scared to ask where we do ask for help,
8 where do we go. But I believe it's our job
9 as students to make sure things are visible
10 and they can see and come and ask questions.

11 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: Thank you.

12 MR. HERSHENSON: At SUNY our campuses
13 and specifically campus student governments
14 do a great job of creating and fostering
15 those virtual spaces, like Juvanie said,
16 having virtual -- whether it's an online
17 forum or a Zoom room or just a way to connect
18 with other students. Maybe you don't want to
19 formally go ask a faculty member or someone
20 on staff for help; there's a really great way
21 to connect with students in a virtual
22 atmosphere.

23 And to address the point about food
24 insecurity, I know at least 80 percent of the

1 SUNY campuses have a food pantry on the
2 campus and at least somewhere within a small
3 radius to the campus, in proximity, so
4 students are able to access these services.

5 I think in some instances we need
6 investment and more investment in these
7 services because there's no extra money for
8 some of the services that so many students,
9 undocumented or international students or
10 other students use. So year after year, as
11 students become more reliant on some of these
12 services, we also need to place the
13 investment to fund them as well.

14 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: Thank you.

15 Thank you, Chair Weinstein.

16 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

17 So now we go to our last

18 Assemblymember, Assemblywoman Bichotte

19 Hermelyn.

20 Rodneyse?

21 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BICHOTTE HERMELYN: Yes?

22 Sorry. I'm trying to -- okay, great. Wow.

23 I'm really excited to see both of you.

24 Oh, my goodness. Juvanie and Brad, thank you

1 for being here, thank you for being leaders.

2 I have a question for both of you.

3 First, Juvanie, congratulations. As
4 the first Haitian-American woman to be
5 elected in New York City and the first
6 Haitian to be elected as a county chair of
7 Brooklyn, I'm really proud of you as first
8 Haitian student to run the student
9 government. So thank you for all that you do
10 and for the leadership, and thank you for all
11 the things that you were expressing.

12 And Brad, I just want to say that I
13 have watched you and I am elated to see your
14 leadership. You want to take over CUNY, it
15 seems. So thank you so much for your
16 leadership.

17 My question is around the Haitian
18 Studies Institute, the Puerto Rican Studies
19 Institute, the Mexican Studies Institute,
20 Dominican Studies Institute, the Jewish
21 Studies Institute, all of these institutes
22 that help students and undocumented students
23 in history and culture and really connecting
24 to our neighborhoods. How are students

1 connecting with these institutes? Are they
2 active? How are you using it as resources?

3 And then the second question is, you
4 mentioned -- what is the rollout for COVID
5 vaccination for all the students, and how are
6 you communicating that? This question is for
7 both of you.

8 MS. PIQUANT: Thank you,
9 Assemblymember Bichotte.

10 So first off, I would say in terms of
11 those institutes, when you're talking about
12 our Black and Latinx studies and just studies
13 that are very important in our journey of
14 collegiate education, we do see they are
15 active and they are trying to stay afloat.

16 But I would definitely like to see
17 more investment in those programs and those
18 departments, because I do believe as diverse
19 as we are as an institution, there is still
20 so much more we can do to help educate the
21 futures leaders, the future doctors, lawyers,
22 nurses, artists, chefs everywhere in New York
23 City. And I think it starts where we receive
24 our education. And expansion in those

1 institutes, more funding for those
2 departments is pivotal.

3 To your question in regards to vaccine
4 rollouts for CUNY students, I particularly
5 have not heard in terms of anything
6 specifically students being vaccinated.

7 We do know some campuses were being
8 used as sites. We do know that, you know,
9 faculty -- I believe -- don't quote me on
10 this, but I believe like our faculty who are
11 in-person, there's an agreement in terms of
12 partnership of them being vaccinated. But in
13 terms of our students being vaccinated, I
14 haven't heard specifically in regards to
15 those plans of that.

16 But if we do, we will definitely
17 follow up and reach out.

18 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BICHOTTE HERMELYN:

19 Brad?

20 MR. HERSHENSON: In short, I think
21 there's so much we're doing on the virtual
22 side of things, and students are really being
23 connected, now more than ever, to so many
24 opportunities.

1 On the vaccine side of things, there's
2 not really a SUNY campus out there where a
3 parking lot is not filled with a giant tent
4 and students aren't involved in vaccine
5 rollout and everything related to testing.

6 So we're on the front lines of it, and
7 we need the investment and support to make
8 sure we get the job done.

9 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BICHOTTE HERMELYN:

10 Thank you.

11 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you both
12 for being here. And we look forward to
13 getting some of your written comments to
14 follow up.

15 So now we're going to move on to
16 Panel C, the Commission on Independent
17 Colleges and Universities, CICU, Drew Bogner,
18 interim president, and Association of
19 Proprietary Colleges, Donna Stelling-Gurnett,
20 president.

21 So Drew, if you can begin, please.
22 You need to unmute yourself. And just a
23 reminder, you have three minutes to make a
24 short statement.

1 DR. BOGNER: Okay, I'm ready. Okay.

2 Okay, so thank you for having me here
3 to testify. I'm Drew Bogner, the interim
4 president of the Commission on Independent
5 Colleges and Universities. We represent
6 about 100 independent colleges and educate
7 about a half a million students in the State
8 of New York.

9 So we're an integral part of the
10 ecosystem of higher education in the state,
11 which makes us quite unique. We educate
12 about 40 percent of New York residents and
13 produce 59 percent of the baccalaureate and
14 undergraduate degrees, at a cost of only
15 5 percent of the state higher education
16 budget.

17 Our students really rely on
18 institutional aid and state and federal aid
19 to be able to make their way through college.
20 Our TAP recipients at our institutions,
21 75 percent of them come from families that
22 earn less than 40,000, so they're very needy
23 students. And our institutions do their part
24 by investing \$6.4 billion every year.

1 The pandemic has hit our families and
2 our students and our sector really quite
3 hard. Our students and families, many of
4 them have lost jobs, they're worried about
5 housing, they have food insecurity, and they
6 are trying to make a decision on a semester
7 by semester basis whether to continue towards
8 graduation.

9 In February of 2020, our colleges made
10 an enormous investment in safety protocols,
11 and we've been very successful in making our
12 institutions a safe place. Our positivity
13 rate is 0.25 percent. In March we followed
14 that up by making this transition to online
15 and hybrid learning.

16 And these two almost superhuman feats
17 did come at a cost. So the cost of the
18 safety measures and the change in
19 institutional delivery systems, coupled with
20 revenue losses, has come to a \$2 billion loss
21 for our sector. The federal aid that we've
22 received has not even covered 25 percent of
23 that. So we're really at a tipping point.

24 So I'm here today to encourage you as

1 legislators to reject the Governor's
2 Executive proposal to eliminate Bundy Aid.
3 Bundy Aid is money we use for student
4 scholarships, and that is \$35 million in next
5 fiscal year and making permanent another
6 amount this year, towards a total amount of
7 \$52 million. And that would go to
8 scholarships for students.

9 In addition, we're asking for TAP,
10 which is our program that helps students, to
11 go through a three-year phase-in that would
12 bring us to the levels we had in 2017 and
13 2018.

14 Investing in Bundy and TAP is the
15 surest way to help those people most affected
16 by the pandemic. And it's also the best way
17 to invest in our economy, because we help
18 educate the workers, the individuals who will
19 rebuild the New York economy.

20 There are a lot of other specific
21 programs listed in my written testimony, but
22 I will leave that to questions. And thank
23 you for your -- my testimony, and I'm open to
24 any questions you might have.

1 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: There will be
2 some.

3 So next let's go on to the Association
4 of Proprietary Colleges, please.

5 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: Thank you.
6 Thank you very much for this opportunity to
7 present this testimony on behalf of the
8 Association of Proprietary Colleges.

9 My name is Donna Stelling-Gurnett, and
10 I'm the president of APC. As you know, the
11 association represents the interests of
12 12 privately held, primarily family-owned
13 colleges that are committed to educational
14 excellence, access and affordability.

15 I would like to begin my testimony
16 today by sincerely thanking all of you for
17 your support for the past year as we've all
18 struggled with the challenges presented by
19 COVID-19. You've included us in public
20 hearings and always made yourselves available
21 to talk with us when needed, and we sincerely
22 appreciate your efforts.

23 In APC's written testimony we have
24 three requests. The first is to expand the

1 Tuition Assistance Program. The second would
2 be to include proprietary colleges in the
3 Governor's proposal to streamline the program
4 approval process. And the third would be to
5 support SED's request for additional funding
6 to support students with disabilities.

7 In the interests of time, I'm going to
8 focus my remarks today on our first request,
9 which is expanding the Tuition Assistance
10 Program.

11 We were relieved to see that the
12 Governor's proposed budget did not make any
13 reductions or programmatic changes to TAP or
14 the Enhanced Tuition Program or the other
15 opportunity programs. The commitment to
16 maintaining financial aid is needed now more
17 than ever, since those students benefiting
18 from the assistance are also those that have
19 been most impacted by COVID-19.

20 Over the past several months, the
21 pandemic has truly highlighted the inequity
22 that exists for minority and low-income
23 students, and their ongoing financial
24 needs are significant. Many are struggling

1 with homelessness, food insecurities,
2 childcare needs, or caring for other family
3 members, all while earning a college degree.
4 This means that state aid programs such as
5 TAP and ETA are especially critical right
6 now.

7 APC realizes that the state is facing
8 a tight fiscal environment this year.
9 However, we feel it's important to advocate
10 for the expansion of TAP. Increasing the
11 minimum or maximum TAP award, or increasing
12 the maximum income threshold, would help
13 ensure that students most impacted by
14 COVID-19 can continue their educations.

15 Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't
16 take this opportunity to mention a new APC
17 initiative, and that is the Student
18 Leadership Council. We asked each APC member
19 to nominate two or three students to serve on
20 this council, and we've been working with
21 them over the past few months about how the
22 legislative process works at both the state
23 and the federal level, as well as how
24 important it is to be engaged in that

1 process.

2 This group of students has amazing
3 stories to tell. They're truly engaged and
4 have many wonderful ideas that we'll be
5 rolling out over the next few months. And
6 we'd welcome the opportunity for you to meet
7 with them directly.

8 And with that, I'll end my remarks. I
9 appreciate your time today, and I'm happy to
10 answer any questions you may have.

11 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Great. So
12 we're going to go first to our Higher Ed
13 chair, Assemblywoman Glick, three minutes.

14 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you very
15 much.

16 Quickly, Dr. Bogner, you've talked
17 about the number of students that graduate.
18 What is the average time that it takes
19 students to graduate out of colleges in the
20 CICU -- on average, out of the CICU colleges?
21 And what is the diversity of the student
22 body?

23 DR. BOGNER: Well, I don't think I can
24 tell you off the top of my head what the

1 average time is to graduation, but I can tell
2 you that we do an exceedingly good job of
3 educating minority students. Our graduation
4 rate for those that attend our institutions
5 is quite a bit higher; we graduate about
6 40 percent of that number.

7 So I do know we do a really good job
8 with that. I know that many of our
9 institutions have graduation rates at either
10 the four-year or the six-year average that is
11 much higher than the average across the
12 country. I --

13 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Well, maybe you
14 can just have, you know, staff give us some
15 of those details. It may even be in your
16 written report, but --

17 DR. BOGNER: I will have them --

18 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: If you could
19 just spend -- you know, we're on a very
20 reduced time frame. So let me ask you, you
21 have a wide range of institutions. You have
22 some very large institutions, like NYU in my
23 district, but you have a lot of smaller
24 institutions. Could you just speak a little

1 bit what the pandemic has done to those
2 smaller institutions and their capacity to
3 survive the pandemic?

4 DR. BOGNER: Well, you know, you would
5 think it makes sense that the smaller
6 institutions would be some of those most
7 impacted, but in reality we have some of our
8 larger institutions that are struggling
9 financially.

10 So I would say some common
11 characteristics will be who you serve. And
12 if you serve students of color or students of
13 lower income, you're going to be more at
14 risk. If you have a larger residential
15 population, you're more at risk.

16 So when I talked about the 2 billion,
17 a significant component of that is not
18 tuition dollar loss but room revenue and
19 board loss.

20 So it's really all over the board in
21 terms of the variables, but those would be
22 the major variables I would see, will be
23 those that I mentioned.

24 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Very helpful.

1 And finally, when you said a
2 three-year phase-in of TAP, are you hoping
3 to -- at what top level are you hoping to
4 reach with any phase-in?

5 DR. BOGNER: We would like to get to a
6 \$6,000 maximum. So in reality we've had a
7 \$165 increase in the maximum in the last 16
8 years.

9 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Okay. Thank you
10 very, very much. That's very helpful.

11 DR. BOGNER: Yes, thank you,
12 Assemblywoman.

13 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Senate, please.

14 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you. Our
15 Higher Ed chair, Toby Stavisky.

16 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

17 May I ask Dr. Bogner a couple of
18 questions. On the Enhanced Tuition Award,
19 has it been accepted by the independent
20 colleges? And if there are issues with it,
21 what would you change?

22 DR. BOGNER: Well, I think we haven't
23 had the number that you would think would
24 make sense. And some of the issues that

1 we've had have been the way in which the
2 processing takes place. And I think the
3 number-one issue has to do with who makes the
4 decision on who receives the award.

5 So right now we are -- we are
6 precluded from weighing in on that. It's
7 somewhat of a random process. So I noticed
8 that in the past when I was president that we
9 had individuals that would receive the award
10 that might have one semester left, and things
11 of that nature.

12 So I would change the involvement and
13 allow the colleges to weigh into that and
14 whether or not to make it somewhat
15 income-driven as well. And that's a bias I
16 have. But I do believe if we were more
17 involved in the selection process of
18 students, I think we would see that it would
19 be more effective.

20 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

21 What effect has -- I know that the
22 independent colleges have been adversely
23 affected by the pandemic, but would you talk
24 about the smaller colleges? Assemblywoman

1 Glick and I had a Zoom with -- sorry, I --

2 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: We lost her.

3 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: You're on mute,
4 Toby.

5 DR. BOGNER: I think I know the
6 institution that you had the Zoom with,
7 because I think we talked about that.

8 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Maybe you can
9 guess the question, in the absence --

10 DR. BOGNER: Well, I don't know the
11 answer to that. But if you want me to talk
12 more about smaller institutions, I would say,
13 though, that clearly we've been through a
14 whole series of ripples in our sector that
15 have been problematic, and they really have
16 started with the recession and the amount of
17 aid that private colleges have put into the
18 system as federal and state dollars have gone
19 away.

20 So we've put in, this year, an
21 additional 6.8 percent of additional
22 financial aid as a sector. Now, just think
23 about that a minute. That's at the same time
24 that we've lost \$2 billion. So we are laying

1 people off, we're suspending pensions, all of
2 those things are happening.

3 And I actually took the Bundy money
4 and did a calculation that with that Bundy
5 money that's lost, it would mean that we
6 would have to lay off around -- almost a
7 thousand people. If we had to make up that
8 aid to the students, we're talking about
9 6,000 or 7,000 students that won't get
10 institutional aid from our institutions.

11 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.
12 Assembly?

13 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Excuse me. We
14 go to our ranker, Assemblyman Walczyk.

15 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Dr. Bogner,
16 thank you very much. Your testimony here
17 today is great.

18 Your written testimony, especially, I
19 found really succinct, and I encourage all
20 members of either committee to look that over
21 again, because I think you nailed down so
22 many great points, especially on Bundy Aid
23 and TAP, which you've reiterated here today.

24 I was wondering if you could zero in a

1 little bit on the impact of the Article VII
2 language proposal to {audio frozen}.

3 DR. BOGNER: Oh, you froze there. You
4 want me to go ahead and talk about that a
5 little bit?

6 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Yes.

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes, why don't
8 you.

9 DR. BOGNER: So the Article VII,
10 that's the change in the authorization
11 process, am I right on that? I don't want to
12 talk about the wrong thing there. Am I --

13 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: I apologize.
14 For some reason the State Office Building
15 sometimes kicks me off the WiFi {inaudible}.

16 Article VII language and the impact of
17 the changes there is what I was looking for.

18 DR. BOGNER: Yeah. So that's the
19 authorization, correct, program?

20 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Yes.

21 DR. BOGNER: So for me, this is really
22 personal, because I was involved in those
23 conversations that have taken place with the
24 State Education Department over the last

1 five years, and we really -- the proposal
2 that's there is the same compromise proposal
3 that we discussed in the offices of the State
4 Department of Education.

5 And the idea behind that is to take
6 pressure off of the State Department of
7 Education on those proposals that don't
8 impact new programs or those programs that
9 have to do with state licensure or those
10 kinds of programs where we require on them to
11 do a certification process.

12 So we're really pulling those off and
13 dealing with those kinds of things that might
14 be a two- or three-course change in a major
15 and those things, so that they can
16 concentrate their staff time on these other
17 ones.

18 And I understood and I listened very
19 carefully about how important it is for them
20 to be involved in guaranteeing quality. But
21 this still gives them the chance to weigh in
22 if they want to. And I listened to some of
23 the testimony earlier, and I'll just say that
24 it sounds to me like we need to go back and

1 have another conversation and find where
2 those lines might exist that make it more
3 realistic. And I think we can find those
4 lines --

5 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: I think so too.

6 DR. BOGNER: -- that we're not talking
7 about making massive changes. And I will say
8 that things have gotten better from where
9 they were three or four years ago, and we
10 complained about this a lot to many of you,
11 and they responded.

12 But there are still ways in which we
13 could improve and streamline the processes in
14 a way that will not take away what we need in
15 terms of maintaining the quality of the
16 programs of the State of New York.

17 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Well, thanks
18 very much. I couldn't agree more. And
19 that's the rest of my time. Thank you, sir.

20 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to the
21 Senate.

22 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you very
23 much.

24 I'm going to go to Senator Jeremy

1 Cooney, who we have not heard from today.

2 Jeremy, are you there? Oh, there you
3 go.

4 SENATOR COONEY: Here I am. Thanks so
5 much. I appreciate it, Chair.

6 Well, good afternoon. I've been
7 waiting so patiently and long to talk to
8 Dr. Bogner from CICU. You represent over
9 500,000 students across New York, and I know
10 how important your role is, and I appreciate
11 you being here, both of you being here today.

12 I represent parts of Rochester and the
13 Finger Lakes region, including my own alma
14 mater, Hobart and William Smith Colleges.
15 And I am a proud son of a college professor,
16 a SUNY college professor at Monroe Community
17 College. And so I'm dismayed, like so many,
18 by the cuts that we've seen, upwards of
19 \$46 million to SUNY alone.

20 But one of the institutions in my
21 district, the University of Rochester, has
22 upwards of \$32 million in cuts, under this
23 budget, alone. That's just one institution
24 in the Finger Lakes region. And University

1 of Rochester is the largest employer in my
2 community, as well as across upstate
3 New York.

4 So here's my question to you. The
5 reduction, especially as relates to Bundy
6 Aid, I think may have a disproportionate
7 effect upon students who are attending
8 colleges and universities in upstate
9 New York. And I'm wondering if you can
10 comment on the need for additional funding,
11 but also the role that these higher
12 educational institutions play in economic
13 development for upstate New York.

14 DR. BOGNER: We're really central to
15 that in two ways, the economic development.
16 So first, we really produce the talent that
17 is really necessary in the state. And when I
18 listen to the Governor talk about the need to
19 rebuild New York, it's really important. And
20 I'll just give you two examples.

21 We educate two-thirds of the nurses
22 and half of the teachers, and both are in a
23 crisis of a whole series of retirements
24 coming, and we're going to need them. And

1 not to mention the engineers. And we have
2 most of the research universities, we have a
3 lot of them in the private side. So we're
4 really important. But we also -- and that's
5 one way we help the economy.

6 The other one is we're anchor tenants.
7 So in what you're taking about is clearly the
8 case in Western New York, but it's also the
9 case on Long Island. The two biggest
10 employers on Long Island are healthcare and
11 education. So if you damage the private
12 sector to a point where we are laying off and
13 we're dismantling institutions and so forth,
14 we will see an impact from that in so many
15 ways.

16 The New York ecosystem is really
17 unique, in that we rely on private higher
18 education to really educate New Yorkers for
19 the jobs that are required. So I really
20 worry about unintended consequences. And
21 right now, with the pandemic, we need to get
22 the dollars to the students and then we'll
23 help the institutions. But the dollars need
24 to go to the students. You know, we have to

1 do that.

2 SENATOR COONEY: I appreciate that
3 comment. And I just want to underscore the
4 connection between economic development in
5 regions like New York and to our higher
6 educational institutions.

7 DR. BOGNER: Yeah, very true. Very
8 true.

9 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Assemblyman Ra.

10 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Thank you,
11 Chairwoman.

12 Dr. Bogner, good to see you.

13 DR. BOGNER: Good to see you again
14 too.

15 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Just a question for
16 you both regarding that TAP proposal.

17 I noticed in your written testimony
18 you talked about that -- I think two-thirds
19 of the students at your institutions are from
20 families making under \$125,000, which is
21 obviously the Excelsior threshold. So I
22 don't know if you have numbers on that. But
23 if you have numbers, you know, that aren't
24 even getting TAP, either of you, up to that

1 110. And the impact it would have, you know,
2 in the number of additional students that you
3 would be able to serve who then might instead
4 be utilizing that instead of taking out
5 loans.

6 DR. BOGNER: I'll just go ahead and
7 talk about that first.

8 I think that is the issue right now,
9 and I believe that we're sidestepping the
10 major issue in these conversations about
11 loans and relieving -- you know, forgiving
12 debt and so forth.

13 And the reality is, is we've really
14 disinvested in higher education over time.
15 When you go back and look at the aid programs
16 that existed in the '70s and the '80s, they
17 were quite different than what we have today.

18 And New York, the same way -- in the
19 amount we used to have for Bundy and the
20 percentage that TAP paid for. And I've had
21 conversations with my friends at SUNY, and
22 they have similar concerns about TAP covering
23 the cost of a SUNY education.

24 And I think we're all in agreement

1 that this is what we need. And if we want to
2 take care of the debt and how that
3 contributes to our economic issues, the best
4 way to do it is to provide the aid on the
5 front end, and then there would be less
6 borrowing.

7 And I won't even get into the federal
8 components. But at the state level, that is
9 exactly what we could do. And right now the
10 need is much greater. So we see all the time
11 how many people have lost their employment
12 and they've used up all of their reserves,
13 all of their savings. Well, those are the
14 students who would get the TAP dollars.

15 So I can't think of anything more
16 important right now than investing in TAP and
17 the opportunity programs.

18 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: And if I could
19 just jump in, I would suggest the same. I
20 know, you know, it's been many years since
21 there's been any structural changes to the
22 Tuition Assistance Program. For instance, I
23 believe it was 2000 when the maximum income
24 threshold was changed from 50,000 to 80,000.

1 And it has not been changed since.

2 And so, you know, I really feel like
3 now is the time -- as Drew said earlier, it
4 is just more important now than ever. You
5 know, the students are really suffering,
6 they're doing the best they can with what has
7 been dealt to them. But, you know, this
8 additional assistance would be tremendously
9 impactful to them.

10 So I would just agree. I think that
11 now is the time to make those changes.

12 DR. BOGNER: We're trying to get
13 research on exactly how many students are
14 stepping out because they can't afford to
15 continue. And I really am guessing that
16 we're looking at a pretty sizable number that
17 stepped out in the fall, might be stepping
18 out in the spring -- and next spring too,
19 next fall too.

20 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Right. Thank you
21 both.

22 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

23 Senator Robert Jackson.

24 SENATOR JACKSON: I was going to say

1 good evening, but it's still afternoon. Good
2 afternoon.

3 DR. BOGNER: I'll look and see.

4 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: Hello.

5 SENATOR JACKSON: But listen, let me
6 thank you for coming in and giving your
7 testimony, advocating for the institutions
8 that you're advocating for. And I have no
9 problem with what you're doing. Because of
10 the fact that your institutions are educating
11 young people -- the majority are young
12 people -- in order to be the leaders of our
13 great state and our country. And that's a
14 good thing.

15 And as you know, some of you know, my
16 fight has been with education, to make sure
17 that enough monies are there so that everyone
18 can get a good education.

19 So the only question I really have of
20 you, and since you represent independent and
21 some private universities also, is that many
22 legislators are talking about increasing
23 taxes on the wealthiest New Yorkers, in order
24 so that we get the money from the feds -- and

1 many experts have said that all of the money
2 that we were going to get from the feds may
3 not be enough in order to have everyone in
4 our state survive. And I know I only have a
5 minute and a half, but quickly, I say that
6 education is not the most important thing for
7 right now, it's about making sure people
8 aren't evicted from their apartments or their
9 homes and enough food for everyone to eat,
10 and everyone to get healthcare, physical and
11 mental health, because this pandemic has had
12 a negative impact.

13 So are you willing to support and say
14 as an institution that we will consider
15 taxing the wealthiest New Yorkers a little
16 bit more? And that's a basic question.
17 Because if not, where is the money going to
18 come from? And so that's my question to both
19 of you. And I'm not trying to set you up or
20 anything, but I'm just talking reality based
21 on everything that I know.

22 DR. BOGNER: So I actually have
23 already answered that question with a few
24 other representatives. So I don't think we

1 would take -- could take a position on that
2 as the independent college association. But
3 I do think that there is an opportunity to
4 open up a dialogue between whatever group of
5 legislators would be pushing that concept and
6 how you might interact with college boards.

7 Now, I don't think the college board's
8 going to take a position either. As a former
9 college president, you know that it's going
10 to vary who's on your board.

11 However, there is a way to get some
12 people who might be very influential into
13 that conversation if you have an opt-in kind
14 of approach, Senator. And so I think there's
15 a conduit, perhaps, for that. And certainly
16 we can talk about that later, if you want.
17 But that would be my answer to it.

18 SENATOR JACKSON: In essence, there
19 has to be a dialogue on this particular
20 matter. Not -- no shoving anything down.

21 DR. BOGNER: Yes.

22 SENATOR JACKSON: Okay. Thank you.

23 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

24 Assembly.

1 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

2 Assemblywoman Hyndman.

3 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: Thank you,

4 Chair.

5 Thank you very much, Donna and Drew.

6 Drew, congratulations in your new role. Just

7 different -- different perspectives. Now you

8 have to listen to all of your colleagues, as

9 opposed to your --

10 DR. BOGNER: I listen to them anyway,

11 because they're friends of mine.

12 (Laughter.)

13 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: Okay. And

14 when the chancellor of SUNY gave his

15 presentation he said there is a shortage --

16 there will be a shortage of 250,000 nurses

17 come 2028. Donna, how many of the schools,

18 of your member schools, offer nursing?

19 That's the first thing.

20 And the second question is your

21 process for additional courses for APC

22 members is the same as any other institution,

23 right?

24 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: That is

1 correct, yes.

2 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: And what is
3 the average length of time that OQ responds
4 to requests, applications for additional
5 courses?

6 And Drew, my questions are asked and
7 answered regarding Bundy Aid, and I know how
8 important it is to your students. But I will
9 ask how many students, Black and Latino,
10 receive Bundy Aid, if you have those kinds of
11 numbers, because I think it would affect them
12 more.

13 So Donna first, and then Drew, please.

14 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: Yeah. So I was
15 just looking at our membership list to answer
16 your first question about how many APC
17 members offer nursing degrees. I believe
18 there are at least two or three. I know
19 Bryant & Stratton, their Syracuse campus is
20 going to be starting a new nursing program as
21 well.

22 To answer your second -- go ahead.

23 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: Is it
24 practical nursing or registered nursing?

1 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: No, registered
2 nursing. Yes, exactly. And I believe Monroe
3 has a B.S. in it as well.

4 So yeah, so we do have -- some of our
5 colleges are producing the nurses. And they
6 also, many of them have very robust medical
7 assisting and, you know, those types of
8 paralegal, you know --

9 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: Right.
10 Because there's a shortage in those areas too
11 because of COVID.

12 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: Right, exactly,
13 medical assisting and so on.

14 And then to answer your other question
15 about the length of time that it takes to get
16 programs approved, you are correct that our
17 process currently is the same as any other
18 college. You know, New York State has a
19 longstanding history of treating all four
20 sectors of higher ed the same. Which is why,
21 when we saw that streamlined approval
22 process, we, you know, would want to have the
23 same flexibility for our colleges.

24 I will say that we -- APC members do a

1 very thorough job of assessing whether or not
2 there's a need for those types of jobs that
3 would come out of new innovative programs.
4 And so when they turn in their program
5 approvals to SED, you know, it's usually a
6 pretty quick turnaround, honestly. You know,
7 I would say within a month or two. So
8 usually it's a pretty quick turnaround.

9 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: My time --

10 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

11 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: Drew, I'll get
12 back to you. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

13 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

14 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Are there any
15 other Senators?

16 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Yes, actually we
17 have me. And then if there's a second round
18 for Toby --

19 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: No, not on the
20 panels, right?

21 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Oh, no, there's
22 no second? Okay.

23 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: And then I have
24 Assemblymembers. So go ahead, Senator.

1 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: So Toby, I'm
2 sorry, you got frozen out of your last minute
3 before, but they will follow up with you. I
4 promise they will follow up with you.

5 So Donna, I don't know if you were
6 here earlier today when I was referencing the
7 State Comptroller's recent audit findings of
8 proprietary colleges, which was really an
9 audit to say: SED, what are you doing about
10 this?

11 So I'm going to ask you, what are you
12 doing about this?

13 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: So it --
14 actually, I did see that report. It was
15 actually in regard to the non-degree sector
16 and their oversight by BPSS.

17 APC and their colleges, we are all
18 degree-granting, so we actually fall into the
19 purview of the Office of College and
20 University Evaluation, like any other
21 degree-granting college in New York State.

22 So, you know, we have a very close
23 relationship with SED, and so, you know,
24 we're always talking with them about

1 accountability standards and metrics. So,
2 you know, it's just -- it's an ongoing
3 conversation.

4 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: So wait, so your
5 mention don't fall into that category?

6 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: No, we don't,
7 no.

8 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Is there another
9 association those groups fall under?

10 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: There is, yes,
11 there's another degree -- it's run by Terry
12 Zaleski. I can get you that information if
13 you'd like.

14 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay. So you
15 don't see this as a problem for your members.

16 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: No. No.
17 They're all very high quality -- again, held
18 to the same standards as any other
19 degree-granting college in New York State.

20 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

21 That's it for me.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Okay, and we
23 have one last Assemblymember, Assemblyman
24 Otis.

1 ASSEMBLYMAN OTIS: Thank you, Helene.

2 And thank you, Donna and Drew.

3 Dr. President Bogner, a question to
4 follow up on Deborah Glick's inquiry before
5 about financial stress for private colleges.
6 If you could go into a little more detail --
7 and I think there's sort of two categories
8 that I'd ask you to talk about.

9 One is just for your average private
10 institution in the state, they're not
11 necessarily in a crisis mode, but my
12 understanding is they have taken a financial
13 hit during COVID. And maybe you could give a
14 little more texture to that.

15 And then I'm very concerned about
16 private colleges who are not surviving. Even
17 before COVID, many private colleges were
18 stressed. We've had closures across the
19 state from some of the smaller private
20 colleges. If you could just share your
21 reflections on these kinds of situations as
22 we sit here today.

23 DR. BOGNER: Yeah. So clearly the
24 major stressor started early on with the

1 recession, and the Governor's Excelsior
2 Scholarship did deepen it for some. For
3 others, it was just recalibration that might
4 have taken a year to push through in the
5 marketplace. But the transfer-student market
6 really faded dramatically because of
7 Excelsior.

8 But I will say that we have some
9 issues that get in our way, and one issue --
10 we should talk about it sometime -- is the
11 definition of university. We are working on
12 that legislatively a little bit, as well as
13 with the Regents. We're the only state that
14 has a very archaic definition of university,
15 where you must have three academic
16 disciplines at the doctoral level, which
17 means you have to have three PhDs.

18 No other state has anything.
19 Massachusetts was the last one. And the
20 common definition is you have graduate
21 programs. So that puts a lot of our
22 institutions at a disadvantage.

23 And if you're SUNY, you're already in
24 the umbrella of being in the State University

1 of New York. So the private colleges are the
2 ones that are at risk.

3 So in the international market, a
4 college means high school. And you're also
5 at risk if you're on a border or if you're at
6 the Pennsylvania border, and you're also at
7 risk if you're dealing with international
8 students or if you're dealing in the online
9 environment.

10 So I'll just put that out there. We
11 have to look at some of those things that
12 could bolster New York.

13 The ones that are most at risk tend to
14 be those that are liberal arts institutions,
15 do not have professional programs, tend to be
16 more rural, and don't have online programs.
17 And it's very hard to be in the online space
18 now. You can't compete, because you're
19 competing nationally with Arizona State
20 University or whatever.

21 So it is hard to come up with new
22 revenue. And I think one of the solutions
23 has to be how do we collaborate. And I'm a
24 big believer in that. And if you want to

1 talk offline about that, I could. And I can
2 tell you a little bit about some of the
3 institutions that are looking at that and
4 what CICU has done to try and encourage
5 collaboration. And I personally have been
6 involved in that and I've consulted on that.

7 ASSEMBLYMAN OTIS: Thank you very
8 much. Thank you for your testimony.

9 DR. BOGNER: Yeah, mm-hmm.

10 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you. And
11 thank you both for being with us today and
12 for your testimony.

13 DR. BOGNER: Thank you.

14 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: Thank you.

15 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We move on to
16 Panel D, On Point for College, Samuel Rowser,
17 executive director, and Hispanic Federation,
18 Diana Cruz, education policy director.

19 And just a reminder, you have three
20 minutes to make your presentation. We
21 already have circulated your written
22 testimony. And we will then -- members will
23 have three minutes to ask a question and have
24 your answer within that three minutes of the

1 panel.

2 So Samuel, can you go first?

3 MR. ROWSER: Sure.

4 Thank you, Chair Weinstein and Chair
5 Krueger, Chairs Glick and Stavisky of the
6 Higher Education Committees, for this
7 opportunity to talk with you guys about
8 transforming lives and communities in the
9 face of this pandemic.

10 I've been listening to a lot of the
11 testimony today, and what I'd like to say is
12 that On Point is the conduit that pulls all
13 this together. We work with those students
14 that need to get to those colleges.

15 We all know that poverty is a problem
16 in the rural and the urban communities, and
17 we know education is one of the most
18 effective pathways out of poverty. We find,
19 based on a Pew Charitable Trust study, that
20 90 percent of the students who earn a
21 bachelor's degree are lifted out of poverty
22 in the course of their lives.

23 Since On Point has been founded, in
24 1999, over 3,000 students have completed or

1 graduated from college, and another 3,000
2 have completed some other post-secondary
3 credential. That means that there will be
4 about \$3 billion over their lifetime which
5 they will spend in their communities.

6 What On Point does is we empower
7 first-generation, opportunity youth, and
8 financially challenged youth with an
9 opportunity to achieve post-secondary access
10 first, post-secondary success next, and then
11 a career for life that will lift their
12 families out of poverty. Without our
13 assistance, these challenges can turn into
14 barriers that lead students to stop out or to
15 never attend college.

16 So On Point helps students develop a
17 plan to address the challenges before they
18 become stumbling blocks. We provide a broad
19 range of services that we tailor to meet the
20 needs of the individual student.

21 On Point, we're unique. We're unique
22 in the nation for the holistic approach that
23 we take when we're helping students. We
24 offer services that no other organizations do

1 -- transportation, on-campus visits, we have
2 Campus Angels. We take hundreds of students
3 on college visits throughout New York State,
4 and we help students fill out their FAFSA
5 applications, their college applications. We
6 work with students in foster care,
7 housing-challenged. And we use volunteers to
8 do wellness checks on our students.
9 Especially during this pandemic, we need to
10 check on them to make sure that they're okay.

11 An investment in On Point is also an
12 investment in New York State's educational
13 institutions. These students are
14 contributing over \$23 million in tuition,
15 fees, room and board, in community colleges,
16 in SUNY, CUNY and the private industry.

17 On Point students persist at a higher
18 rate at the community colleges. We have a
19 persistence rate of a little over 77 percent,
20 while it's about 60 percent at the local
21 community colleges. So if these students had
22 not had On Point support, they wouldn't even
23 have gone to college.

24 And so we believe that providing the

1 million dollars in state funding for the On
2 Point program will continue to have an impact
3 on our students.

4 So we thank you for this opportunity
5 to speak, and we ask you to keep it On Point.

6 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes, Donna? I
7 mean Diana.

8 MS. CRUZ: Diana, yeah. I just wanted
9 to make sure that I can go next.

10 Thank you, committee members. I know
11 it has been a long day. My name is Diana
12 Cruz, and I am the education policy director
13 at Hispanic Federation, and leader of the
14 Latino Education Advocacy Directors
15 Coalition, focused on supporting Latino
16 students across New York State.

17 We appreciate you for hearing our
18 testimony today, and we understand that since
19 the pandemic began, Latino students have been
20 hit disproportionately hard. And the health
21 crisis is forcing many of them to decide
22 between staying in school or working to help
23 their families.

24 Hispanic Federation strongly urges the

1 Legislature to include and prioritize the
2 following budget and legislative
3 recommendations as they directly will benefit
4 and remedy some of the issues that many of
5 the Latinx college students are facing right
6 now.

7 Speaking to the Senator Jose Peralta
8 New York State DREAM Act, Hispanic Federation
9 asks the Legislature to ensure that the
10 \$27 million for the New York State DREAM Act
11 remains. We also believe that HESC needs
12 additional funding to spearhead community
13 outreach and partnership with community-based
14 organizations to continue dispelling
15 misinformation and expanding opportunities to
16 apply.

17 Moreover, HESC alone cannot provide
18 enough outreach. SUNY and CUNY also need
19 funding to increase marketing and recruitment
20 efforts to assist students.

21 Moving towards direct student
22 programs, with the COVID-19 crisis many
23 Latino students have been forced to drop out.
24 Through the CUNY ASAP program, 44 percent of

1 Latino students and 85 percent of Pell or TAP
2 recipients increase their chances to
3 graduate. We urge the Legislature to restore
4 the 2.5 million in funding to continue the
5 impactfulness of this program.

6 Similarly, the CUNY Citizenship Now!
7 program offers free immigration services to
8 help individuals and families on the path to
9 U.S. citizenship. The Legislature must
10 restore the 20,000 in funding so that Latinx
11 and other individuals in New York City can
12 continue to receive this support.

13 Moreover, the Hispanic Leadership
14 Institute is a critical program that helps to
15 ensure that SUNY's leadership is reflective
16 of the Latino students that they enroll. We
17 strongly support the Hispanic Leadership
18 Institute and urge that \$150,000 in funding
19 be restored to SUNY for this purpose.

20 As for our positions, Hispanic
21 Federation strongly opposes the \$200 tuition
22 increase or future increases, as they will be
23 detrimental for students, especially students
24 from underserved backgrounds who are already

1 struggling to continue their higher education
2 studies.

3 Our time to envision a tuition-free
4 college is more critical now than ever, and
5 we have been part of the immense work that
6 the CUNY {inaudible} has been leading to make
7 CUNY a free-tuition institution. We strongly
8 advise that the state committee takes a stand
9 on addressing tuition challenges for students
10 now.

11 We're also concerned on how the
12 pandemic will affect student borrowers,
13 particularly for students who have been
14 harmed by transcript withholding. Hispanic
15 federation, along with Young Invincibles and
16 partners at the New Yorkers for Responsible
17 Lending and the Student Borrowers Protection
18 Center, are calling on New York leaders to
19 stand with student borrowers and end
20 transcript withholding.

21 Finally, we must ensure that current
22 and future funding is allocated equitably
23 across SUNY and CUNY. This funding can
24 address some of the challenges that our

1 students are facing now, and we must act on
2 it now.

3 Thank you for your time, and I
4 reemphasize how critical it is to focus on
5 these priorities. Thank you.

6 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you for
7 being here.

8 We go to Assemblyman Stirpe.

9 ASSEMBLYMAN STIRPE: Thank you, Chair.

10 I'd like to ask some questions of Sam
11 at On Point. Hi, Sam, how are you doing?

12 MR. ROWSER: How are you doing, Al?

13 ASSEMBLYMAN STIRPE: I'm doing all
14 right.

15 You know, as we've discussed before,
16 you really do work in collaboration with a
17 lot of the other opportunity programs. So
18 can you explain to us a little bit who, who
19 you work with, what programs and what you do?

20 MR. ROWSER: Well -- absolutely, Al.
21 One of the things I would say On Point does
22 is we're working with students,
23 first-generation students, we're working at
24 campuses all across the state, and we're

1 working with the EOP, HEOP, SEEK programs to
2 make sure that those students get into the
3 college -- and not just get in, but they are
4 able to stay in college. We provide them
5 transportation to and from. You know, during
6 the pandemic we flipped over from taking them
7 shopping to getting them laptops so they'd
8 have, you know, access to getting their
9 classwork done. We have Campus Angels on
10 these campuses that are working also with our
11 students to help them to be successful.

12 So it's really a full-service program.
13 If I could give you an example, you know, if
14 a student goes off the campus, they make sure
15 they have health insurance. But what happens
16 if you get a toothache and you need dental
17 support? Well, we have a dentist that does
18 pro bono work. We drive out, pick you up,
19 bring you home, fix your teeth, take you back
20 to school.

21 So it's providing those services that,
22 you know, we normally think is okay for our
23 children but other students don't have those
24 same opportunities.

1 ASSEMBLYMAN STIRPE: So, I mean, the
2 reality is the success of a lot of these
3 opportunity programs sort of depends somewhat
4 on the ability of On Point to sort of lift
5 them up and fill in the cracks when somebody
6 else doesn't do that.

7 You also, you know, I think, try to
8 help kids get paid internship jobs and
9 regular jobs, you know, in the summer and
10 stuff like that. Can you talk a little bit
11 about that?

12 MR. ROWSER: Absolutely. That's our
13 third leg. Our first leg is access, our
14 second leg is success, our third leg is
15 career services. And we're helping students
16 do cover letters, we're helping them do the
17 actual mock interviews, and then we're
18 helping them get paid internships. Our
19 students don't have the ability to work for
20 free -- they need income for their
21 families -- so a paid internship is critical.
22 And we don't do it in the standard way. We
23 don't just place you at first. We vet the
24 company, what do you want, vet the student,

1 what do you want, and then we put them
2 together. And then once a week we go back
3 and sit down with the company and the student
4 just to make sure it's working out for both.

5 ASSEMBLYMAN STIRPE: Okay. Well,
6 thank you. And I thank On Point for what
7 they do. And maybe some day we'll convince
8 New York State that On Point needs to be one
9 of the opportunity programs.

10 Okay, thank you.

11 MR. ROWSER: Get New York State On
12 Point.

13 (Laughter.)

14 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

15 We're going to go to the Senate now.

16 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you. I
17 just want to double-check, does our Higher Ed
18 chair have any questions?

19 SENATOR STAVISKY: No, ma'am.

20 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you. Then
21 I will go to Senator Robert Jackson, three
22 minutes.

23 SENATOR JACKSON: Yeah, okay. Good
24 afternoon. Yes, still afternoon. I thought

1 it was evening already.

2 But hi, and good to see both of you.

3 And I listened to both of your presentations,

4 and obviously I'm all in favor of it,

5 especially when you talk about helping

6 students and especially in your geographical

7 areas. To the best of my knowledge, you're

8 both representing Black and Latinx

9 communities. And I'm an African-American

10 myself, so believe me, I know, I've come up

11 through the Upward Bound program and through

12 EOP. So believe me, I do know.

13 And even I grew up on social services,

14 my wife and I have broken that cycle and we

15 have three beautiful girls that are 45, 40

16 and 34, an M.D., an assistant principal, and

17 a daughter that's in the arts. So let me

18 just tell you, I know how important education

19 is, and community-based organizations that

20 help us to move us in the right direction.

21 And that's very, very important.

22 And for me, it was in high school,

23 Erwin Goldberg, our track coach, in which

24 many, many people of color, young men and

1 women, Black and Latinx and some Caucasian
2 also, we feel that Erwin Goldberg was like
3 our stepfather. That's how much he cared for
4 us overall. And I say this to you, that
5 that's very, very important.

6 And so the only question that I have
7 is -- I can assume what your answer is, but I
8 have to ask you. Obviously, you know what
9 the situation is as far as the budget. I
10 don't need to tell you. And we hope that we
11 get all the money from the feds. And where
12 necessary, we're going to have to raise
13 revenue ourselves.

14 And so my question is that in order to
15 make sure that we cover all of the programs
16 that need to be covered, along with housing,
17 food security and health, along with
18 education, are your organizations willing to
19 go along with the fact that we have to raise
20 revenues from the wealthiest New Yorkers in
21 order to survive this pandemic? That's my
22 basic question. Because I don't have any
23 questions about your programs; I'm sure that
24 the intent in what you're doing is very, very

1 good, and I have no problems with that, I
2 support you wholeheartedly.

3 But I have to ask that question in
4 order to know whether or not we're going to
5 have support in trying to do what we need to
6 do in New York State.

7 MR. ROWSER: I would say absolutely,
8 that if we want to be successful, we have to
9 share the wealth. And the wealthy have it,
10 so they need to share it with the rest.

11 MS. CRUZ: Senator Jackson, I think
12 you're definitely, you know, posing a lot
13 of -- a lot of -- a great question, and it is
14 necessary to kind of take a stand.

15 I think at Hispanic Federation, for
16 us, we know that that the money is needed, we
17 know that all of this is the only way that
18 we're going to be able to afford like the
19 different programs and needs, is to get more
20 money.

21 I think for us, it's more about
22 thinking, what do we do with the money. Kind
23 of going back to Senator Liu's question that
24 he was presenting earlier on, what do we do

1 Thank you.

2 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

3 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: So next,
4 there's a list of Panel E, but it should
5 actually be Panel -- the next is just going
6 to be the PBA of New York State, Ryan Law,
7 and then we go to the final panel, the last
8 five witnesses.

9 So, Ryan, please proceed.

10 OFFICER LAW: Good evening, respective
11 members of the joint committee. My name is
12 Ryan Law, and I am the president of the PBA
13 of New York State, and I'm a University
14 Police officer at SUNY New Paltz.

15 In the interests of time, and knowing
16 that you have my testimony before you, I will
17 summarize my testimony.

18 Simply put, our members in our union,
19 and those in University Police, are on 2014
20 salaries -- 2014 salaries. Our members have
21 been on the front lines of the pandemic
22 response from the beginning. We continue to
23 work through the pandemic response, and we
24 will see this through to the end. We will be

1 here working to the end of this, when it
2 comes to an end.

3 As most of you know, our vaccine sites
4 and our testing sites, a lot of them are on
5 SUNY campuses across the state. That puts
6 our University Police officers on the front
7 lines of this pandemic in every way
8 imaginable, and so much so that our members
9 are -- have contracted the virus while in the
10 scope of their duties.

11 And beyond that, I have to mention,
12 you know, they go home at the end of their
13 shift not knowing if they're taking this
14 virus home to their families and their loved
15 ones. You know, and then they turn around,
16 they come back for that next shift regardless
17 of that, and they continue to stand that
18 line, work through the fight against the
19 COVID-19 pandemic, side by side with our
20 healthcare workers.

21 And they do it proudly. We know the
22 risk, we know it's our job. But again, we're
23 doing this on 2014 salaries.

24 Back in March of 2020, through the

1 arbitration process, our union was awarded a
2 series of increases from 2015 through 2018.
3 That pay bill is now known as the Governor's
4 Program Bill No. 1 of 2021. And I am here to
5 respectfully ask the Legislature to introduce
6 Governor's Program Bill No. 1 of 2021 as soon
7 as possible, and move our members off those
8 2014 salaries, as I think we can all agree
9 that they deserve.

10 You know, our members, they don't
11 forget to show up and work the testing sites,
12 they don't forget to show up and work the
13 vaccine sites. So I'm asking that our
14 Legislature doesn't forget about our members,
15 what we're doing in the field, continuing as
16 they sit home and have discussions with their
17 families about where we are with our
18 salaries -- they continue to go out there and
19 put their best foot forward and work this
20 fight against the pandemic.

21 So with that, I'll conclude and
22 certainly take any questions. Appreciate
23 your time.

24 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you. We have

1 Assemblyman Walczyk with a question.

2 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Hey, Mr. Law.

3 First, thank you for your service to
4 the people of the State of New York, and
5 please pass that on to your membership. You
6 guys do a phenomenal job for us and I think
7 sometimes, as far as police agencies go, you
8 know, sort of get a little bit forgotten.
9 But we certainly haven't forgotten you here
10 in Northern New York, and appreciate
11 everything you do.

12 OFFICER LAW: Thank you very much.

13 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Yeah,
14 absolutely. This came up in a prior budget
15 hearing, and I just kind of wanted to get
16 your thoughts. Do you think the state is
17 trying to merge Park Police and Troopers?

18 OFFICER LAW: I know that there has
19 been, you know, some back and forth on that.
20 I think right now, you know, the
21 commissioners are in middle of trying to
22 figure that out. So as much as the Parks and
23 the PBA as a whole has tried to receive a
24 solid answer on that, I don't think that we

1 have.

2 And in regards to the Park Police
3 officers, you know, they need that solid
4 answer, they need to know what's going on
5 with the future, they need to know what's
6 going on with the future of the agency. You
7 have Park Police officers that have worked
8 there for, you know, many, many years. Our
9 -- one of our -- the vice president and one
10 of the directors on the board has been there
11 for over 30 years.

12 So they're dedicated to the agency.
13 They care about the future of the agency. So
14 we are seeking to see, you know, exactly what
15 the next move is, and hopefully we can get
16 some answers in the near future ourselves.

17 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: I wondered,
18 along the same lines, what does your staffing
19 look like for University Police? Are you
20 seeing similar attrition rates? And are
21 there academies scheduled, or are you getting
22 answers there from the state?

23 OFFICER LAW: Sure, great question,
24 and thank you.

1 another agency that doesn't have to foot that
2 bill.

3 And that puts the department back in
4 the beginning stages of hiring and training
5 and getting them through their first year.
6 So --

7 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Thank you. My
8 time is running out, but we appreciate you
9 keeping our students safe, and please reach
10 out any time.

11 OFFICER LAW: Thank you very much,
12 Assemblyman. Appreciate your support.

13 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: So now we go
14 from the Assembly to the Senate.

15 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Hi. Our first
16 questioner is Senator Toby Stavisky.

17 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you. Real
18 quick, Ryan. Senator Gounardes, I think
19 Senator Savino and I co-primed your pay bill
20 last year, and it will go in in one form or
21 another probably -- you know, if it hasn't
22 gone in already.

23 I just wanted you to emphasize the
24 loss to the state in the training aspects.

1 You touched on it, but what happens to your
2 members after they're trained?

3 OFFICER LAW: So what's different from
4 all of us not being centralized, which would
5 be a focus for us in the near future, is that
6 we send our officers to the municipal academy
7 nearest to where they're getting hired. Once
8 they graduate the academy, they go directly
9 into field training.

10 And that process, from hiring until
11 they're on the road by themselves with not
12 needing a field training officer, is
13 approximately a year. To get through that
14 first year of training, including salary and
15 equipment, it costs a about \$100,000 -- and I
16 think I'm on the low side of that. I believe
17 when I was working with the commissioner's
18 office, they were near \$120,000 per officer.

19 This has gotten to the point, Senator,
20 where we have municipals and town PDs that
21 basically poach from us. They wait for our
22 officers to get trained. And when we're
23 competing with what they are paying in
24 salaries -- to my point of our 2014 current

1 salaries -- it's a no-brainer for a lot of
2 these officers to leave.

3 And I'll give you a prime example. We
4 had an 11-year lieutenant leave recently to
5 go next door to a municipal and make -- I
6 think it was about \$33,000 more a year than
7 what they make with us.

8 You couple that with no heart bill, no
9 20-year retirement, not being centralized --
10 it's almost becoming easier for them to walk
11 away after getting trained and the state
12 footing the bill to train them.

13 So this is a great concern of ours,
14 and we know it's been a concern of yours.
15 And we appreciate anything that you can do to
16 work on it with us in the future.

17 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

18 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

19 (Overtalk.)

20 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: And may we have
21 three minutes back on the clock for
22 Senator Robert Jackson.

23 SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you. Thank
24 you. Hey, Ryan, how you doing?

1 OFFICER LAW: I'm doing good, Senator.
2 Thank you for your time. I know it's been a
3 long afternoon.

4 SENATOR JACKSON: Oh, I know. But
5 listen. Clearly, my gosh, you have not had
6 contract raises since -- you know, I've
7 listened to what you had to say, and you're
8 at SUNY New Paltz. And I was at SUNY New
9 Paltz back in the '70s. So that's where I
10 went, and I am a grad from SUNY New Paltz,
11 and my oldest daughter also.

12 But clearly, Toby, you're there --
13 make sure that I'm signed on immediately to
14 the Program Bill No. 1 of 2021. I clearly
15 support the increase. Just knowing that you
16 haven't had a raise and all the other issues
17 that you talked about. So I wanted to let
18 you know that. I mean, if you were talking
19 about something else with respect to
20 especially education, I don't -- this is not
21 the same thing, in my opinion as -- I'm not
22 going to ask you the same questions I asked
23 the others, do they support to tax a little
24 bit more of the wealthiest in order to fund

1 education. Education is a
2 multi-billion-dollar --

3 OFFICER LAW: Sure.

4 SENATOR JACKSON: But when it comes to
5 just your pay bill, I say to you I support
6 it. Toby, make sure that I'm on it also,
7 okay?

8 So Ryan, I don't have any questions of
9 you, but I wanted to let you --

10 SENATOR STAVISKY: You'll send in a
11 whatever you call it?

12 SENATOR JACKSON: Yeah. Sure.

13 I want you to know that I support the
14 pay bill and I will advocate for it in the
15 Democratic Conference.

16 OFFICER LAW: Senator, I appreciate
17 that very much. And on behalf of our members
18 within the union, and certainly those of
19 University Police, thank you very much, that
20 it means a lot.

21 SENATOR JACKSON: You're welcome.

22 OFFICER LAW: Thank you.

23 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you. I
24 think the Senate's done.

1 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Okay, and the
2 Assembly is done.

3 But I also want to join my colleagues,
4 Ryan, in thanking you for the efforts of your
5 members all the time, but particularly this
6 past -- it's almost the past year, in helping
7 to keep our campuses safe and helping with
8 the COVID-19 vaccine distributions and
9 testing that's happening on campuses. Thank
10 you.

11 OFFICER LAW: Absolutely. Thank you
12 for the kind words, and thank you for your
13 support. Take care.

14 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

15 So now we go on to our last panel.
16 And it is CUNY Coalition for Students with
17 Disabilities, Lennyn Jacob, secretary;
18 Friends of Liberty Inc., Shawn Denise Landry,
19 president; APACS, Inc., Michael Molina,
20 president; SUNY Albany, a student from SUNY
21 Albany, Ahmat Adam Djouma; and Center for
22 Food Safety, Jean Halloran.

23 So if we could start with the CUNY
24 Coalition for Students with Disabilities,

1 that would be great.

2 MS. JACOB: Buenos tardes. Good
3 afternoon, distinguished members of the State
4 Legislature. My name is Lennyn Jacob. I'm a
5 student activist and most proud to be a
6 loving mother of a neurodiverse son with
7 autism. I served for 12 years as a teaching
8 assistant for children with disabilities with
9 the DOE in the Bronx and chose to further my
10 education at Bronx Community College, BCC.
11 That's right, the Bronx is in the house.

12 I proudly serve as the treasurer of
13 the CUNY Coalition for Students with
14 Disabilities, CCSD, at BCC chapter, majoring
15 in nuclear medicine technology. I was
16 recently elected as secretary for the CUNY
17 Coalition for Students with Disabilities,
18 CCSD, the university-wide group that
19 represents all CUNY students with
20 disabilities. Who are we? CCSD.

21 According to CUNY's Office of
22 Institutional Research, there are more than
23 1,800 CUNY students with disabilities
24 enrolled in degree programs in my proud

1 borough known as Da Bronx. We all rely on
2 reasonable accommodations from our colleges
3 to have an equal opportunity to succeed,
4 especially in the area of distance learning
5 made necessary because of COVID-19.

6 The enrollment of students with
7 disabilities at CUNY is at an all-time high,
8 with more than 11,000 of us enrolled at our
9 university. At CUNY, our disabled student
10 enrollment has grown by more than 50 percent
11 over the past two decades -- and yet our
12 state funding for crucial accommodations and
13 support services for these students has
14 remained flat over the past 27 years. It
15 breaks my heart.

16 The CUNY Coalition for Students with
17 Disabilities supports the New York State
18 Education Department's \$7 million budget
19 request to enhance support services for
20 students with disabilities statewide. This
21 new source of funding would supplement, not
22 replace, existing college and university
23 support for students with disabilities.

24 CCSD enthusiastically supports the

1 State Education Department's budget request
2 for students with disabilities that would be
3 the first of its kind in the nation, to yet
4 again allow New Yorkers to lead the way for
5 the rest of the country.

6 My sincerest hope is that this would
7 also increase the likelihood of success for
8 my son and others like him, who I encourage
9 to come to CUNY to better their lives and the
10 lives of their families.

11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

13 Can we go on to Friends of Liberty.

14 MS. LANDRY: Yes. Good evening, and
15 thank you, committee members.

16 Liberty Partnership Program serves
17 more than 15,000 marginalized and oppressed
18 students across New York State. We are the
19 only state-funded dropout prevention program
20 and have been since we were established in
21 1988 under Section 612, subdivision 6, of the
22 Education Law, to address the significant
23 dropout rate among New York youths.

24 The program and staff provide a safety

1 net for at-risk students and their families.
2 We support the whole student, their social,
3 emotional and academic needs. We were doing
4 this before the pandemic.

5 Liberty has been here, as I said, for
6 50 years. We appreciate and are grateful for
7 all of the support we've received during that
8 time. We also are dependent and wouldn't
9 have survived without contract extensions for
10 program year 2019-2020. This extension saved
11 programs from closing and limited furloughs
12 and reductions in staff. This extension
13 provided that safety net that we talk about
14 for all the at-risk students during the
15 pandemic.

16 However, the delayed funding and the
17 20 percent withholdings that we received and
18 just received payment in January of 2021
19 greatly influences our continuity and limits
20 our ability to plan and to spend our funds in
21 a way that's most effective for our students.

22 We're asking for a contract extension
23 for program year 2020-2021 to continue to
24 support social-emotional interventions

1 without interruptions.

2 We provide families and community
3 engagement services and college prep
4 activities. And if New York receives
5 additional federal support, we urge important
6 investments into our students. Liberty
7 prepares students to give back academic and
8 economic capital in New York State. We have
9 not stopped giving those services since the
10 pandemic has begun, and we'd like to be
11 included under the guidance of Executive
12 Order 202.6 to qualify as essential service
13 workers. Item Number 8 and Item Number 12
14 include us in that. We're not technically
15 DOE -- Department of Education employees, but
16 under Priority 1b we are ready and willing to
17 go back into the schools as soon as possible.

18 So again, thank you. We're hoping for
19 an increase in budget, a contract extension,
20 and essential worker categorization.

21 Thank you.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you. We
23 now go to APACS, Michael Molina.

24 MR. MOLINA: Thank you very much.

1 Good evening, everyone. It's good to see you
2 all. Thank you for being here, and thank you
3 for all that you do.

4 I also want to just give particular
5 thanks to Higher Ed Chairs Glick and Stavisky
6 and to the Senate Finance chair and Ways and
7 Means chair, Chairs Krueger and Weinstein,
8 for their assistance in helping our STEP and
9 CSTEP programs to get their funds flowing in
10 December. Yes, in December, six months into
11 the fiscal year. So thank you for your
12 support, and thank you for your comments.

13 Today, again, I'm here as president of
14 APACS, which is the professional association
15 of CSTEP and STEP directors and staff
16 throughout New York State. The evening --
17 the day has been long, so I promise I will be
18 brief.

19 What I would like to say, first and
20 foremost, is that we are requesting a
21 20 percent increase in our funding for STEP
22 and CSTEP programs. And this is in keeping
23 with a pledge made by Speaker Heastie to
24 double the funding of CSTEP and STEP and of

1 all of the opportunity programs.

2 I think the one thing I think that --
3 I hope we can all agree about is that all of
4 the opportunity programs in New York State
5 are the crown jewels of our education system,
6 without doubt.

7 As you all know, the COVID pandemic,
8 which arrived in March -- March 6th, I
9 remember the date well -- has
10 disproportionately impacted Black and Brown
11 communities. Our students have had to endure
12 financial instability, resulting in instances
13 where students have been forced to work long
14 hours to help support their families, which
15 of course impacts on academics.

16 Our students have had technology
17 shortcomings, insofar as both hardware and
18 internet access is concerned, and this is not
19 just in urban areas. This is in both urban
20 and non-urban areas. We've had issues in
21 Central New York where STEP students have had
22 problems accessing WiFi. So that's become an
23 issue.

24 But we have intervened, we've been

1 forced to intervene in the area of mental
2 health and wellness issues. We have provided
3 support to our students to help fill the gaps
4 of virtual learning, and we have provided
5 training to our students as well in how to
6 learn in a virtual environment. Everyone
7 thinks that you go virtual and then it just
8 happens. Well, that's not the way that it
9 works.

10 So I'm very proud of the work that
11 we've done, how we have pivoted. And I'm
12 really proud of the 100 STEP and CSTEP
13 programs, their staffs, the institutions that
14 sponsor them, and the fact that we've
15 provided stability to 20,000 students and
16 their families. So --

17 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank --

18 MR. MOLINA: Yes.

19 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you. The
20 time has expired.

21 MR. MOLINA: Thank you.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We have your
23 written testimony.

24 MR. MOLINA: Very good, thank you.

1 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Next I'm going
2 to call on the SUNY student, Ahmat Djouma.
3 And Ahmat, if you would like, I'll tell you
4 when there's 30 seconds left so you'll know
5 about the time to conclude.

6 But you're on.

7 MR. DJOUMA: Thank you. Good
8 afternoon to the members of the Legislature.
9 My name is Ahmat, and I am a student at
10 University at Albany, majoring in political
11 science with a sociology minor. I am also a
12 student who is blind, registered with the
13 Office of Disability Resource Center.

14 It is my hope that my education at
15 University at Albany would be on a path for a
16 career in law or government. My achievements
17 and academic successes are all due to the
18 support of many like On Point and colleges --
19 and colleges -- and the Disabilities Offices
20 in colleges.

21 With the increasing number of students
22 with disabilities in colleges, many of these
23 offices are underresourced, and enhancing the
24 support funding request would help them in

1 providing support for equal education.

2 The Disabilities Offices go above and
3 beyond in supporting a student. And with
4 limited resources, it's become very difficult
5 for them to do so. These supports include
6 but are not limited to providing
7 accommodations like Braille services,
8 accessible textbooks, ASL interpretation,
9 making course materials accessible and
10 providing professional training to
11 instructors.

12 I am hopeful this year that the
13 budget -- that the Legislature will provide
14 the funding that is greatly needed for
15 college Disabilities Offices to continue
16 providing this support. On behalf of the
17 students with disabilities, I strongly
18 support the State Education Department's
19 "Enhancing Support and Services for
20 Postsecondary Education Success of Students
21 with Disabilities" funding proposal of
22 \$7 million in its 2021-2022 Executive Budget
23 request.

24 Thank you, and I hope you all will

1 support this proposal on behalf of the
2 students with disabilities. Thank you.

3 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

4 Next we go to the last witness before
5 we have questions: Center for Food Safety,
6 Jean Halloran.

7 MS. HALLORAN: Hi. And thank you all
8 very much for hanging in to the bitter end
9 here.

10 I'm from the Center for Food Safety,
11 which is an organization that works -- a
12 national organization that works for safe
13 food and a safe environment. And I'm here to
14 talk to you about something completely
15 different than what you have discussed for
16 the rest of the day, which is our impending
17 crisis of loss of effectiveness of
18 antibiotics.

19 And the reason I'm discussing that
20 here is because of the Higher Ed Committees'
21 responsibilities for regulation of
22 veterinarians. Veterinarians are critical in
23 this issue. It was a surprise to me, and I
24 think it's a surprise to many people that

1 two-thirds of the antibiotics produced in the
2 United States are given not to sick people,
3 but to relatively healthy animals being
4 raised in industrial farming conditions, in
5 order to prevent them from becoming sick.

6 This is something that has got to
7 change. We are overusing antibiotics, and
8 the more you use them, the less effective
9 they are. We already have a crisis where
10 more than 100,000 people are dying of
11 infections that used to be cured by
12 antibiotics in the United States.

13 This is of course not matched by the
14 COVID deaths, but this could go beyond the
15 COVID totals. A research outfit in the U.K.
16 has estimated perhaps 10 million deaths a
17 year globally if this problem isn't
18 addressed.

19 So Assemblywoman Rosenthal and
20 Senator Kavanagh have developed legislation
21 that would limit the use of antibiotics to
22 just treating sick animals and would not
23 allow use in New York State for disease
24 prevention. And we urge you to incorporate

1 their bill in this year's state budget, in
2 order to preserve the effectiveness of
3 antibiotics for the future.

4 Thank you very much.

5 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

6 We're going to go to Assemblymember
7 Glick.

8 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Just a couple of
9 comments, and then one question for Michael.

10 First of all, I very much support the
11 State Education Department's attempt to
12 increase dramatically our commitment to
13 \$7 million for students with disabilities.
14 We have seen a growing number of students
15 working and seeking to be professionals, and
16 they need the education. And the schools
17 have not had the kind of support that they
18 need. So it will certainly be in my chair
19 letter to the Speaker, and we will advocate
20 for it as strongly as possible.

21 But I have a question for Michael.
22 Thank you so much for being here at the end
23 of the day. CSTEP and STEP programs are
24 incredible.

1 I'm just wondering, you said -- now,
2 the withholding from the 20 percent from last
3 year, you finally -- did everybody actually
4 get that in December? Or are there still
5 programs that have not had payment out of SED
6 because the Division of the Budget has not
7 released it?

8 MR. MOLINA: My understanding is that
9 the latter, that there are still institutions
10 that have not received their final payments.
11 And what SED did, as you know, is to withhold
12 20 percent of the final payment. So that's
13 what they've done.

14 So it's still -- so some institutions
15 still have payments pending, yes.

16 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: If there's any
17 way that you can find out who they are or
18 give them to us, we certainly will ask SED
19 about that.

20 But if you have members who can raise
21 their hands -- because sometimes you get
22 different answers. I'll ask them, I'll get
23 the answer from you, and hopefully they'll
24 actually look the same, and we will try to

1 get any of those dollars freed up as quickly
2 as possible. Because that money should be
3 available out of -- you know, we've been told
4 that it's been released, so we have to be
5 sure that that happens.

6 And as far as the 20 percent increase,
7 it's under discussion for our one-house.
8 Certainly Speaker Heastie has -- we have
9 always been committed to increasing. And
10 when we have flat funding, it's a good time
11 to go ahead and add to it. So assuming we
12 get money from the feds -- you know, that's
13 the big wishing and hoping. Without that, I
14 think we're kind of -- it will be a little
15 bit tough. But if we get federal dollars
16 coming in, we will press very hard for that.

17 And I want to thank you and all of
18 your members for the great work they've been
19 doing.

20 MR. MOLINA: Thank you.

21 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

22 We'll go to the Senate.

23 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

24 Toby Stavisky, chair of Higher Ed.

1 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

2 First, Michael, real quick, thank you.
3 Your members were very effective in
4 contacting us. And if -- would you send a
5 copy to us too? Because we want to be
6 helpful.

7 MR. MOLINA: Absolutely.

8 SENATOR STAVISKY: Real quick, let me
9 just thank the CUNY coalition for Students
10 with Disabilities.

11 I am so proud to represent Queens
12 College in my district in the State Senate.
13 And they have a really great group of folks.
14 And I truly miss seeing Dr. Rosa and
15 Charmaine and Steve and all of the people
16 from Queens College. I know they're part of
17 the entire group.

18 And I'm delighted that the Executive
19 did not cut the CUNY LEADS program, because
20 it is such a wonderful program. And we too
21 in our budget -- it will be in my
22 recommendation that we do the best we can for
23 the coalition.

24 But getting back to Michael, to what

1 do you attribute the unfairness in that
2 distribution, in the 25 percent withholding?

3 MR. MOLINA: You know what? It's hard
4 to say. And this is part of the problem,
5 Senator. And that is that NYSED is
6 completely incommunicado. They don't give
7 you information.

8 These -- these -- you know, this
9 20 percent -- these 20 percent cuts are
10 announced informally. No one wants to put
11 anything in writing, so it's all very
12 mysterious.

13 And I was listening to the testimony
14 throughout the day and people were talking
15 about 5 percent cuts, and we got 20 percent?
16 I'm a little confused by that. So -- but
17 seriously, we don't get much information from
18 NYSED, very, very little information
19 throughout this whole process -- throughout
20 this entire fiscal year. And by that I mean
21 contracts and disbursements for the current
22 year and the final payments for last year.

23 SENATOR STAVISKY: These are really
24 important programs, because they work. And

1 very shortsighted, I must say, because these
2 students -- as I said in previous testimony,
3 that with a degree they're going to earn more
4 money and they're going to stay in the
5 community, participate, pay more in taxes.
6 And we've got to do the best we can for
7 really all of the opportunity programs, but I
8 know CSTEP and STEP.

9 Thank you.

10 MR. MOLINA: Thank you, Senator.

11 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

12 Assembly.

13 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes, we have
14 Assemblywoman Hyndman.

15 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: Still here.

16 Thank you, Chair Weinstein.

17 Thank you to all the participants. To
18 Michael Molina, I remember you when your hair
19 was darker, as I used to run a CSTEP program
20 out of -- a CSTEP and STEP out of NYCOM.

21 And so I just wanted to say that I'm
22 sure the Speaker will work with -- make sure
23 the Assembly does do their best in getting
24 the additional funds that CSTEP and STEP

1 programs need. And thank you to all the
2 panelists.

3 I'm done, Chair Glick. Thank you very
4 much. I'm tired now.

5 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you. I
6 don't know, Helene, should you or I take bets
7 on whether Harvey or Robert Jackson has
8 something different in their rounds?

9 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Maybe they can,
10 you know, merge their time. So I think
11 you're going to Senator Jackson, right?

12 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: I am going to
13 Senator Jackson.

14 SENATOR JACKSON: Well, thank you.
15 Thank you.

16 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay, you're on
17 mute, Robert.

18 SENATOR JACKSON: I'm not now, right?

19 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Not now.

20 SENATOR JACKSON: I can say good
21 evening to everyone.

22 But let me just say I want to thank
23 you for coming in and sticking -- even though
24 you're the last panel, you're a very, very

1 important panel, especially when you talk
2 about students with special needs and
3 disabilities.

4 And believe me, I do know, I do have a
5 relative that is now totally blind as a
6 result of retinitis pigmentosa. And so,
7 believe me, I do understand the needs of
8 children with IEPs and children with
9 disabilities, and adults.

10 And so I just wanted to say to all of
11 you that I support you. And as far as the
12 money that I think, Ahmat, you said
13 \$1 million -- is that what you said?

14 MR. DJOUMA: \$7 million.

15 SENATOR JACKSON: How much did you say
16 again?

17 MR. DJOUMA: \$7 million.

18 SENATOR JACKSON: Seven million. When
19 you're talking about a \$192 billion budget,
20 \$7 million is a piece of dust in that amount
21 of money.

22 So let's push for that. And Toby, I'm
23 standing with you as the chair of Higher
24 Education to try to do what we can do for the

1 children and students with disabilities.

2 Okay, Toby? Let me know.

3 SENATOR STAVISKY: Absolutely.

4 SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you, everyone.

5 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you,
6 Robert.

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

8 Thank you, Robert.

9 And we have Harvey Epstein from the
10 Assembly.

11 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you all.

12 And I want to thank you all for being here so
13 late in the day. And for all of my
14 colleagues, Students with Disabilities
15 Advocacy Day is February 25th. So if you
16 have some time that morning, we have -- we'll
17 do a virtual press event and we're going to
18 push for this \$7 million for students with
19 disabilities. It's a really important issue
20 that we haven't seen an increase in funding
21 in so long. So I'd love to have as much
22 support from my colleagues.

23 And I want to appreciate both Chair
24 Glick and Chair Stavisky about like pushing

1 this issue in their letters. It means so
2 much to everyone.

3 And so I just -- I just would love to
4 hear from one of the students or some of the
5 students kind of how has COVID had serious
6 impacts on learning and remote learning for
7 students with disabilities. Are there unique
8 challenges that the students have faced? And
9 what, as the State Legislature, should we be
10 doing to ameliorate those issues?

11 Ahmat, if you wanted to go or --

12 MR. DJOUMA: Certainly.

13 I want to start by saying I think that
14 generally students who actually -- who can't
15 say they usually have access to technology
16 and they access online information,
17 everything being digital -- everything being
18 digital, so digital accessibility is very
19 important.

20 And when something is not designed
21 digitally to be accessible, that
22 automatically, you know, kind of -- you know,
23 it's basically -- they're not able to
24 participate if something is not designed with

1 accessibility in mind.

2 And then also, you know, I think that
3 this \$7 million funding is also necessary
4 because if -- just because you have a
5 document or a textbook sent to you doesn't
6 make it automatically accessible. You need
7 someone to be able to work that document to
8 make it accessible.

9 So I think in terms of COVID, I think
10 it's -- everything being online, we have to
11 deal with digital online barriers.

12 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Well, thank you
13 for doing that, thank you for raising that.
14 So you think there's -- it's just a funding
15 issue, or are there structural changes that
16 need to be made that we could do
17 legislatively?

18 MR. DJOUMA: I think that -- well,
19 there is a funding issue where I think that
20 funding is needed to be able to train staff
21 or instructors that -- for teachers of
22 students with disabilities to be able to
23 design things that are accessible.

24 But I think that there are some areas

1 I think we can go further in. I think also
2 educating our future generation when it comes
3 to designing websites or, you know, things
4 like that, they know how to design things
5 that are accessible.

6 And I think that we can go further,
7 but I think we can start with that \$7 million
8 and being able to train the staff and
9 instructors on how they should make the
10 content accessible.

11 And, you know, also providing other
12 services like college transition, if a
13 student is trying to transfer to a different
14 college, you know, getting the necessary
15 information on what needs to be done.

16 But I think that there are certain
17 things -- I think changes that need to be
18 done, and I think the Legislature could take
19 certain action in terms of, I think, setting
20 guidelines for digital accessibility, I
21 think.

22 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you.
23 Thank you so much.

24 And thank you all, and thank you for

1 being here. Thank you, Chairs.

2 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

3 We go to Senator Krueger, and then
4 back to the Assembly.

5 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

6 Great. So I also want to thank all of you
7 for being here tonight, and to voice the --
8 though I usually stay pretty quiet during all
9 of these hearings, to say it's amazing to me
10 that New York State is putting so little
11 money into these programs, the STEP, CSTEP,
12 Liberty, the opportunity programs.

13 Because I've been studying what works
14 to get people out of poverty for pretty much
15 my whole life, and the answer is education,
16 and college in particular. Even a couple of
17 years of college makes a giant difference in
18 whether their families move out of poverty
19 forever or not.

20 So you look at these programs New York
21 has developed -- and thank you, Michael, for
22 all your advocacy to help educate everyone
23 about the importance of specific programs for
24 students with special needs -- you can either

1 invest a tiny amount of money in supporting
2 their ability to get into college and move
3 through college, or you can check off a box
4 somewhere that will show how many years we
5 will need to subsidize them and their
6 families because they end up in poverty.

7 And so the cost/benefit difference is
8 so radical, so radical in what these programs
9 do and can do, that I think it is just worth
10 repeating for the record -- even though
11 everybody here already knows this -- what a
12 phenomenal set of programs we have, and yet
13 we do starve them to death, and we get all
14 excited when we don't start off with a cut at
15 the beginning of budget season.

16 So yay, we didn't start off with a
17 cut. But imagine how many generations of
18 people wouldn't have remained in poverty if
19 we had been investing more in exactly these
20 programs with exactly these kinds of outcomes
21 for my lifetime.

22 So thank you all for the work you're
23 doing and for being students who are brave
24 enough to fight for your rights even in

1 really tough times. Because again, a little
2 help will change your future, your family's
3 future.

4 Thank you for letting me go on a rant
5 briefly. Thank you.

6 Helene.

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes, thank you.

8 We go to Assemblywoman Jo Anne Simon.

9 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: Thank you. And
10 so I want to thank my colleagues. I want to
11 thank these witnesses. It's been a very long
12 day, and I know that you've been waiting for
13 a chance to testify.

14 And I also just want to say, for those
15 of you who are students with disabilities, I
16 started off years ago as a disabilities
17 services provider long before you were born.

18 And, you know, at that time I worked
19 with colleagues, I was in Washington, D.C.,
20 at Gallaudet at the time, and I worked with
21 colleagues who were in the SUNY schools. And
22 while there have been improvements, we still
23 haven't come as far as we need to in SUNY.

24 You know, the SUNY schools and the

1 City University schools have just not funded
2 disability services enough. So they've kept
3 people back, they haven't been able to
4 provide the support that they need. And
5 with -- that \$7 million could go a long way,
6 and it really should be just a first step in
7 making our schools more accessible for
8 students with disabilities.

9 So I want to thank you very much for
10 your testimony and to tell you that you have
11 a friend in the Assembly. I work very
12 closely with Assemblymember Epstein and
13 others to support students with disabilities,
14 and, you know, we're here for you.

15 So thank you very much.

16 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you,
17 Assemblywoman Simon.

18 And I just want to join my
19 colleagues -- first of all, you have many
20 friends in the Assembly, not just Simon and
21 Epstein, and in the Senate --

22 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: And in the
23 Senate.

24 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: I want to join

1 my colleagues in thanking you for being here
2 and spending the day with us. I think it is
3 good that you are the last panel, because
4 it's your comments that are going to stay
5 with us as we end this hearing.

6 So with that, I want to announce that
7 the Higher Ed hearing is now concluded. And
8 tomorrow morning at 9:30, please join us for
9 the Mental Health hearing.

10 Thank you all.

11 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you all
12 very much.

13 (Whereupon, the budget hearing
14 concluded at 6:23 p.m.)

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