



Office of the University Student Senate
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The New York State Assembly Joint Legislative Public Hearing on 2024 Executive Budget Proposal: Higher Education

**Ms. Salimatou Doumbouya, Chairperson University Student Senate (USS)
Student Trustee
City University of New York**

To the members of the committee on Higher Education, I thank you for this opportunity to testify on struggles that are affecting the daily lives of current and prospective students. As the sole student trustee on the board for CUNY, I will always champion the needs of students first. It is my honor to represent the 225,000 degree-seeking students of the City University of New York.

We as students need CUNY to receive adequate funding to help us graduate then become the driving force in the workforce across industries in our City and State. The students of CUNY are in need of investment in initiatives that our struggles and day-to-day needs. To help students succeed in our university our needs for a positive well being must be met; those needs are:

1. Funding for student transportation
 2. Mental health counselors and advisors
 3. Food security
 4. Zero emission carbon footprint
 5. Community College Enrollment and Retention
 6. A new bargaining agreement contract for faculty
 7. Modernizing the CUNY System, Building Infrastructure Maintenance and Renewal Repair
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1. Transportation support for all CUNY students
 - a. All CUNY students, regardless of their eligibility for a program, citizenship status, or economic background, deserve to have access to education. The Fair Fare program offers an opportunity but with a financial barrier and the extra steps to apply.
 - i. Incorporate a fund for each CUNY student to use the MTA for free. We believe that by using the available technology, whether it is OMNI paired with CUNY's technology. A partnership with ride-sharing programs can be explored.
 2. Food Security
 - a. Enable a vending process that would entice a CUNY-wide vendor to contract as a food vendor across campuses.
 - i. We ask that the committee takes into consideration a sustainable funding system by the state for the food pantries and access to resources in CUNY.



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The students of CUNY need a Hunger free CUNY and Healthy CUNY. Partnerships with organizations like Swipe Out Hunger should be strengthened.

3. Mental health and advisement counseling

The students of the CUNY are dealing with challenges in their daily lives while passionately pursuing to acquire a Higher Education degree. Students are dealing with mental health challenges where they need support and are unable to afford a therapist. CUNY is understaffed when it comes to counseling and advisement. Investment in these items are critical for students to have proper guidance.

On behalf of the 225,000 CUNY students we are calling on you all to invest in students most essential needs.

Respectfully Submitted,

[Salimatou Doumbouya](#),

Chairperson

University Student Senate

City University of New York Trustee

www.usscuny.org