

‘Fight back’ effort under way

Bad news budget for SUNY, students and parents

By now, UUP leaders have heard that the governor looks to reduce state funding for SUNY by more than \$152 million. This represents a two-year cut in SUNY state aid of some \$562 million—nearly \$85 million less than it was 20 years ago.

“These cuts only serve to deepen our resolve,” said UUP President Phil Smith. “And when the public learns just how out of proportion these cuts are—that SUNY has been hit with nearly 25% of the cuts levied against all state agencies combined—they’ll stand up and fight alongside us.”

UUP kicked off its latest public awareness campaign with a 30-second TV ad that makes the case that cuts to SUNY hurt students, families and the economy. The ad began airing in Albany Feb. 8; it will resume Feb. 21-25 in large media outlets and air again in March.

The ad prompts viewers to go to UUP’s new Web site, SaveSUNY.org. The site encourages visitors to sign an online petition (more than 500 signatures were collected in the first 48 hours) and to fax lawmakers to reject both the governor’s budget and his so-called Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act. UUP is currently preparing another media blitz to deal with the ill-conceived “flex” legislation.

Here’s what you can tell lawmakers, colleagues, family and friends about it:

Myth: The legislation will save millions of taxpayer dollars.

Reality: The legislation will save money by allowing the state to further abandon its obligation to provide an affordable, accessible system of public higher education. Students and parents would pay more.

Myth: The flex legislation will create jobs.

Reality: There is no evidence that public/private partnerships—especially those created without government oversight—raise revenue. In fact, SUNY’s previous joint ventures, through special bills enacted by the Legislature, have cost taxpayers millions in lost revenue.

Myth: SUNY tuition would not go up more than 2.5 times the five-year rolling average of the Higher Education Price Index.

Reality: SUNY could impose differential tuition increases on top of the HEPI index. In other words, there would be no limits on what SUNY could charge.

Myth: There is no need for the state comptroller and attorney general to continue to approve contracts for services.

Reality: The Act repeals the law requiring the state comptroller and AG to approve contracts. Without it, SUNY would be able to outsource union jobs, which signals a deeper threat to the collective bargaining process.

Myth: SUNY will act responsibly without government oversight.

Reality: The legislation eliminates state appropriations for tuition and other revenues, so there is no guarantee that student tuition and fees will be restricted to benefitting the academic mission of the campus. Even more ominously, the Act authorizes the University to deposit its fund *outside* the state Treasury.

“Don’t be fooled by the hype,” Smith said. “SUNY wants the power and the freedom of a private university and it will pay any price to get it—including making it easy for the state to walk away from its responsibility to fund public higher education.”

How can I help?

- Send all your personal e-mail contacts a note to check out SaveSUNY.org and encourage them to sign the petition, fax letters and pass it on. UUP’s goal is to start a viral campaign that will flood lawmakers with the facts.
- Urge your members to take part in advocacy days in Albany. The next UUP advocacy day is **Feb. 23**; NYSUT’s annual Higher Education Lobby Day is **March 2**. UUP is also joining forces with CUNY’s faculty union, NYPIRG and student groups in a special advocacy event in Albany **March 9**.

SAVE THESE DATES!

FEBRUARY		
Feb. 23	UUP Advocacy Day*	Albany
MARCH		
March 1-2	NYSUT Higher Ed Lobby Day	Albany
March 9	Public Higher Ed Action Day	Albany
March 15-16	NYSUT Committee of 100	Albany
March 23	UUP Constituency Group	Albany
APRIL		
April 16-18	SOMOS EI Futuro Conference	Albany
April 20	UUP Advocacy Day*	Albany

* Tentative dates—please check the UUP Web site for possible changes.

NOTE: The links to the full articles bring you to a page on the publication's Web site. While every effort is made to ensure these links are still active, the publication may cancel or change these links without notice

The Journal News —Feb. 11

Plan could mean higher SUNY tuition costs

In his letter to the editor, UUP President Phil Smith shares the concerns the union has with the governor's proposal to virtually deregulate SUNY:

Allowing each SUNY campus to set its own tuition rate would potentially deny access to thousands of qualified students who are looking for an affordable, quality public higher education.

Full story available at:

<http://www.lohud.com/article/20100211/OPINION/2110330/1076/OPINION01/Plan%20could%20mean%20higher%20SUNY%20tuition%20costs>

Press & Sun-Bulletin —Feb. 9

Binghamton University to offer veteran employee buyouts

Binghamton UUP Chapter President Darryl Wood comments on the administration's plan to offer buyouts to some long-term campus employees:

"If we have fewer people to provide (instruction), it's going to have an impact on either quality or quantity," said Darryl Wood, who works at BU's Anderson Center for the Performing Arts and heads the Binghamton chapter of United University Professions. UUP represents about 1,400 of BU's professors, librarians and other professional employees.

Under the plan, a worker with 25 or more years of uninterrupted service would receive a one-time payment of 50 percent of his or her base salary if their application to leave is granted. Those with 15 or more years would get 35 percent under the program, which BU calls "voluntary separation."

Full Story available at:

<http://www.pressconnects.com/article/20100209/NEWS01/2090411/-1/ARCHIVE>

The Legislative Gazette —Feb. 8

SUNY changes protested

More than 300 UUPers, joined by students and members of other unions, rally at the Capitol against proposed budget cuts and the Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act:

To the beat of drums, several hundred voices chanting "Hey hey, ho ho, SUNY flex has to go," and "You say cut back, we say fight back" were heard outside the Capitol last Friday during a rally against the governor's proposed cuts for SUNY and for his plan to partially deregulate the institution.

Members of United University Professions, its affiliate New York State United Teachers and the New York State Theater Institute, protested in hopes of urging lawmakers to eliminate another budget reduction proposal for SUNY and to reject Gov. David A.

Paterson's proposed Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act.

Full story available at:

http://www.legislativegazette.com/Articles-c-2010-02-08-65319.113122_SUNY_changes_protested.htm#print



—Feb. 5

Educators, students hold "Save our SUNY" rally

This Gannett News Service story reports on UUP's Feb. 5 rally at the Capitol:

Professors, administrators, students, and others held signs that read "SOS: Save Our SUNY" and "Stand up for SUNY" as leaders from United University Professions and New York State United Teachers spoke out against Paterson's plans. They said his reform plan would have disastrous effects on SUNY.

"I'm not trying to scare people, but I think (the cuts are) going to kill SUNY," UUP President Phillip Smith said after the rally. "It is abandoning public higher education all together."

Full story available at:

<http://polhudson.lohudblogs.com/2010/02/05/educators-students-hold-save-our-suny-rally/>



SUNY union members to rally against cuts

The newspaper's "Campus Notebook" previews the rally UUP would be holding the next day:

This Friday, a group of educators, students and union officials will join at the Capitol to object to planned cuts in funding for the State University of New York. United University Professions, which represents 35,000 professionals and faculty members at 29 SUNY campuses, will lead the charge.

The UUP is asking state lawmakers to increase state funding and to reject the gover-

nor's proposed Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act, saying it would pave the way for steep tuition hikes.

UUP President Phillip Smith points out that the proposed \$118 million reduction would leave the SUNY system with \$80 million less in state support than it had in 1990, when it was educating 40,000 fewer students than today.

Full story available at:

<http://www.timesunion.com/AspStories/story.asp?storyID=896733&category=SCHENECTADY>



State deficit grows to \$8.2B

The governor reports that the state's financial dilemma has gotten worse:

Maybe they're taking their cues from Puxsutawney Phil.

While the famous groundhog predicted six more weeks of winter Tuesday, Gov. David Paterson offered more stormy news Wednesday on the budget: the 2010-11 budget deficit will grow from \$7.4 billion to \$8.2 billion.

Lawmakers followed their own winter ritual, criticizing Paterson by demanding firmer numbers before all parties could advance with the already contentious negotiation of the 2010-2011 budget.

Full story available at:

<http://archives.timesunion.com/mweb/wmsql.wm.request?oneimage&imageid=9400236>



Politicians should support NYSTI

This letter to the editor from a concerned citizen asks the governor and Legislature to restore funds to NYSTI, which faces the loss of its public funding:

NYSTI enables students to experience the irreplaceable richness of live theater performances. At a time when educators and parents bewail the cookie-cutter offerings on commercial TV, it is most distressing to learn that this jewel of an oasis may be subject to significant state budget cuts that would certainly jeopardize its school program.

Full story available at:

<http://archives.timesunion.com/mweb/wmsql.wm.request?oneimage&imageid=9400153>