

**Joint Legislative Budget Hearing Testimony**  
**Monday, February 8, 2016**  
**President Robert Jones**

Thank you Chancellor ... and I want to thank the committee chairs and members for the opportunity to address you today on this critically important program.

EOP currently operates on 43 of the 64 SUNY campuses, including 14 community colleges—with two additional programs currently under development.

As you know, EOP students receive a range of services and academic supports.

They also receive financial support to help with non-tuition costs of college.

Most incoming freshmen at senior colleges participate in a residential summer program that gives them comprehensive preparation to enter the college experience.

I cannot overstate the importance of this program, which has been recognized as a national model.

As the Chancellor mentioned... UAlbany's EOP program has been extremely successful.

We currently have 750 EOP students on our campus, and more than 5,000 alumni across the nation and around the world.

With the increased funding that you included in last year's budget, we were able to admit an additional 50 EOP students—for an incoming class of around 200.

I want to thank you for that increase, and I can assure you that this was a very sound investment.

At UAlbany, EOP's first to second year retention rate is 92%, compared to 81% for our overall population.

And our 6-year graduation rate for EOP is 78%, as compared to 68% overall.

EOP is so effective that we are replicating its strategies in our university-wide student retention and completion initiatives.

And UAlbany's positive experience with EOP is representative of the success of the program across SUNY.

Because has been so effective in creating access and success for underrepresented communities—as a system we would like to expand the benefits to even more campuses and more students.

There are several campuses that don't have EOP that have identified large numbers of students who would benefit from the program.

Seven community colleges have requested funds to launch EOP.

And System Administration has received requests to find innovative ways to expand EOP, enhance support, and increase success rates among EOP students.

Again, I am absolutely convinced of the efficacy of the EOP model, and I'm confident that an increased investment in this program will pay tremendous dividends for SUNY and across New York State.

I would like to thank all the members of the Joint Committee, and on behalf of both SUNY and UAlbany, we appreciate your consideration of these requests.

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