

Testimony

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The Value of Higher Education in New York State

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Joint Budget Hearing on Higher Education
Hamilton Hearing Room B, 2nd Floor
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Introduction

Good afternoon, and thank you members of the Joint Fiscal Committee on Higher Education. I am Laura Anglin, President of the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities, representing more than 100 private, not-for-profit colleges and universities located here in New York State. I appreciate this opportunity to share the perspective of New York's Independent Sector of higher education.

You each have a copy of our legislative priorities brochure for state fiscal year 2014-15.

At its heart, New York's Independent Sector of higher education is about students. Investing in New York's students is investing in New York's future. There are few opportunities to publicly express our appreciation, so THANK YOU for supporting students and protecting their choice of more than 250 colleges and universities in New York State.

The Independent Sector

As I do each year, I would like to share a few highlights of our sector. New York's private, not-for-profit colleges and universities provide nearly 490,000 students with a variety of higher education options and environments. The Independent Sector grants more than one-half of the bachelor's degrees, as well as the majority of master's, doctoral, and first professional degrees earned in the state. The sector enrolls 38 percent of New York's Black and Hispanic college students and graduates 57 percent of all Black and Hispanic students. Further, one in three New Yorkers (27%) enrolled full-time at an independent college comes from a family earning less than \$40,000 annually, and one in nine have a family income below \$20,000 (11%).

The Value of Higher Education to New York's Students

Thank you for your commitment to fully funding student aid programs that help New Yorkers meet their college expenses. We are grateful for your support of the Tuition Assistance

Program, Direct Institutional “Bundy” Aid, the Higher Education Opportunity Program, the Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program and its high school counterpart, Liberty Partnerships Program, and targeted programs for nursing and teaching.

Tuition Assistance Program

Currently, nearly 90,000 resident students depend on TAP to attend an independent college or university in New York State. TAP awards for dependent undergraduate students have not changed for more than a decade. More funding is necessary to achieve greater access. As you know, TAP was designed to protect student choice and preserve one of New York’s strongest higher education assets—its diversity. This year, as we celebrate TAP’s 40th year, we should discuss some reforms and enhancements including:

- (1) Reducing the number of TAP schedules, so any student attending a New York State college or university today can access the maximum TAP award available today;
- (2) Updating the American with Disabilities Act TAP so students receiving TAP and enrolled part-time have realistic satisfactory academic progress guidelines;
- (3) Using the federal definition of Independent Student;
- (4) Discussing alternatives to Ability to Benefit requirements, following changes at the federal level.

We also support the following enhancements, if funds become available:

- (1) Increasing the undergraduate TAP maximum award to \$6,500;
- (2) Increasing the undergraduate TAP maximum award for independent students and increasing the income ceiling for these students; and
- (3) Reducing the restrictions on part-time TAP.

Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP)

New York’s opportunity programs are models for the country and have a proven effect on the number of minority, economically disadvantaged, and first-generation students who are prepared for and complete their degrees. Four opportunity programs serve approximately 25,000 students each year, but more needs to be done. The Arthur O. Eve Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) addresses this disparity by providing more than 4,500 students with support services and financial aid, helping them graduate at rates above the national average for all students. Our sector is deeply committed to this program and other opportunity programs. On average, we contribute more than \$5 in institutional support for every \$1 in state support. Some of clcu’s colleges and universities match every state dollar with more than \$8! More than simply a student aid program, HEOP is a community with an extensive support

system. The model is so near and dear to many of our colleges and universities that many have replicated it to help students outside the parameters of HEOP admission.

As a new five-year funding cycle begins, we support the request advanced by the New York State Board of Regents, for an additional \$4 million to expand the program to serve more students in the face of overwhelming demand. We estimate only about 10% of eligible students are currently served.

In addition, clcu has been engaged in discussions with the State Education Department on ways to improve the delivery, efficiency, and administration of HEOP and we look forward to working with the Department and the Legislature to maximize the effectiveness of this program.

The Value of Higher Education to New York's Businesses

Higher education provides business with the qualified employees they need and in turn a highly educated workforce helps attract new businesses.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Incentive Program

In his Executive Budget, the Governor proposes offering the state's best and brightest high school graduates with scholarships to study in STEM-related fields. We applaud this initiative as a way to fill the half-million STEM jobs anticipated to open in the state by 2018. Currently, of all the bachelor's degrees awarded in the state, just one quarter (23%) are awarded to students pursuing STEM and related degrees. To leverage all of New York's higher education assets in bolstering our STEM-educated workforce, we want to ensure that program eligibility extends to students who wish to enroll in a private, not-for-profit college or university in New York State.

In 2011-12, the Independent Sector awarded nearly 6 in 10 (58%) of the bachelor's degrees awarded in STEM fields in New York State. While one-third of its bachelor's degrees earned in the United States are in STEM fields, half (50%) of all degrees awarded in China and Japan are in these critical areas. We are already behind, and risk widening the gap if we do not fully engage all campuses in creative efforts such as the Incentive Program. Right now, every other scholarship program currently in statute enables students to take their state-funded scholarship equal in value to SUNY tuition to the New York independent college or university of their choice.

Private colleges and universities are leaders in STEM education. Many are anchor tenants in their communities. Many educate large numbers and proportions of New York State resident students, often students from the immediate region. Once graduated, these students fill critical positions at engineering and technology companies in their communities. Let me share four telling examples of clcu member campuses that could be affected by the Governor's proposal.

- Le Moyne College, which enrolls approximately 2,800 undergraduates, more than 90% of whom are state residents, has partnered with Syracuse University (SU) to create an innovative 4+1 program in engineering. Students complete their undergraduate science degree at Le Moyne while taking engineering courses at SU at no additional cost. Those who complete their undergraduate degree at Le Moyne are automatically admitted to an SU master's degree program in engineering with a 50% tuition waiver. Le Moyne attracts large numbers of students seeking careers in the STEM disciplines; more than half of the incoming students with declared majors last fall were STEM majors. Additionally, Le Moyne graduates comprise a significant share of the workforce in Central New York, with nearly 40% of Le Moyne alumni living within a 60-mile radius of Syracuse.
- Another regional leader in STEM is the College of Mount Saint Vincent in Riverdale. A recent study funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) shows that Mount Saint Vincent has the highest proportion of STEM degrees awarded to Latino students of any Hispanic Serving Institution.
- Closer to where we sit today, Siena College manages more than \$8 million in active federal grants that support STEM education. Through a NSF program, *Educating Scientists for Tech Valley: A Cohort Scholars Program*, Siena is providing 45 students with scholarships and research opportunities. Further, through the College's Center for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity, more than 75 students take part in summer STEM research projects.
- Mercy College serves more than 11,000 students and employs nearly 200 full-time professors. In 2013, the NSF awarded nearly \$1.5 million to establish the Mercy College Intensive STEM Teacher Initiative, a five-year program to prepare and graduate certified middle or high school math and biology teachers. The program is recruiting women and underrepresented minorities to pursue STEM teaching careers.

We believe that all of New York students should be able to benefit from the STEM Incentive Program regardless of where they choose to attend college.

The Value of Higher Education to New York's Local and State Economies

Colleges and universities are significant economic drivers, providing local economies with jobs and economic activity. In 2011, New York's Independent Sector contributed a total of \$63.2 billion to the state's economy, a positive impact in every region of the state.

Greening and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Initiative

To further local development, create jobs, encourage greening, and support greater numbers of STEM students, we believe the state should develop a Greening and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) capital program. Working with the Dormitory Authority (DASNY), we propose that the state enact a \$500 million capital matching

grant program to finance projects at public and private colleges and universities that promote energy efficiency or enhance STEM education. We also ask that the Legislature support the Executive Budget language extending deadlines in the original Higher Education Capital Matching Grants Program (HE Cap) statute, including the provision to allocate up to \$13.7 million in unused funds in a second “recycle” round.

Leverage College and University Research Partnerships

We are supportive of another round of Regional Economic Development Council funding, as well as for START-UP NY and high technology programs including the Centers for Advanced Technology (CATs), the Innovation Hot Spots and Incubators program and the Stem Cell Innovation Fund. Supplementing these efforts, we believe the state should also reinstate the Faculty Development Program and the Technology Transfer Incentive Program to retain talented researchers and promote commercialization.

Conclusion

In closing, I would like to thank the Legislature for its support for students, and key aid programs that help them achieve their dreams. I look forward to working with you this year, and I am happy to answer any questions.

