

Talking Points

Higher Education

Budget Resolution

March 2001

- We live in an increasingly competitive high-tech world – one that demands highly-skilled workers
- To make sure New York workers can meet these demands, the Assembly’s budget resolution will keep a quality college education affordable for working families
- Our budget protects essential financial aid programs, ensures academic excellence, increases funding for community colleges, and makes it easier for parents to attend college
- In all, our budget plan increases funding \$107 million over last year
- That’s \$136 million over the governor’s current proposal which fails to adequately address the needs of our students and schools

Protecting access to a college education

Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)

- New York’s Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) helps working families across the state pay for a college education
- Last year, the Assembly raised income eligibility for TAP from \$50,500 to \$80,000 — making more families eligible for the award (*from Viewpoints 2000/June 2000*)
- We also succeeded in increasing the maximum TAP award from \$3,060 to \$3,400 to help cover the cost of tuition for students attending public colleges and universities (*from Viewpoints 2000/June 2000*)
- Although we accomplished a lot last year, more can be done to help working families send their children to college
- This year’s Assembly budget provides an additional \$21 million above the governor to improve TAP
- For instance, our proposal doubles the TAP award for graduate students to \$1,100 – whereas the governor’s proposed budget freezes this funding at last year’s level

- The Assembly also proposes to eliminate the TAP ‘uppercut’ – which decreases TAP awards to college juniors and seniors
- In addition, we are creating a Supplemental TAP program to extend TAP eligibility to students who need an additional semester to graduate

Increasing TAP awards for families with more than one child in college

- Families with more than one child attending college face the daunting task of paying for school while trying to make ends meet
- That’s why the Assembly proposes an increase in TAP awards for these families
- For example, under the Assembly’s plan, a family with an annual income of \$35,000 and two children in college could see a savings of more than \$1,400 – doubling the current benefit of this program

Increasing assistance to underserved students

- Another way to make colleges more accessible is through higher education opportunity programs, which provide academic support and financial assistance to economically and academically disadvantaged students
- These programs help more students attend college while promoting campus diversity
- Opportunity programs like HEOP, EOP, and SEEK help lower-income families send their children to college
- The Assembly increases funding for these programs by over \$12 million from last year
- Our budget also includes a \$4 million increase to the Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP) and the Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP) which provide funds and services for disadvantaged students to pursue scientific, technical or health-related fields

Improving the Quality of Higher Education

Increasing Aid to Community Colleges

- Community colleges offer a quality education to students and provide workers a way to update their skills so they can compete in the ever-changing workplace
- To help community colleges continue providing such a valuable service to students and workers, the Assembly’s budget increases base aid to community colleges by \$175 per student

- This is an increase that community colleges across the state called for to help schools keep tuition costs down, maintain educational excellence, and reduce their dependence on local property taxpayers
- In addition, our resolution contains a five-year plan to increase the state's commitment to community colleges – making schools less dependent on local funding and taxpayers
- Our budget stands in stark contrast to the governor's proposal, which freezes funding at last year's level — failing to consider growing costs and enrollment

Ensuring educational excellence with full-time faculty

- An effective, rewarding college education depends on quality instruction, and a dedicated full-time faculty is essential to providing it
- Unfortunately, only 65% of the professors at SUNY colleges and universities are full-time
- The numbers for CUNY schools are even more startling – 51% in its senior colleges and less than 60% in its community colleges
- The governor's budget would make matters worse by cutting full-time faculty funding
- But the Assembly's proposal restores these cuts and increases funding by over \$22 million so that state colleges can attract the best professors available

Helping Students with Children Attend College

- As the demand for highly-skilled workers grows, so does the need for affordable child care for parents who must attend college to learn new skills
- To address this need, the Assembly increases funding for Child Care Services by \$2 million, as well as restores the governor's proposed \$3 million cut
- This builds on the over \$3 million for SUNY, CUNY and community college campus-based child care centers the Assembly secured in last year's budget agreement

Promoting Campus Safety

- Our responsibility to students does not end with increased funding and classroom standards — we must also protect their physical safety on campus
- To make sure our colleges are as safe as they can be, our budget calls for annual fire safety inspections at our schools and universities
- Violations left uncorrected after 30 days would bring new fines

Continuing My Efforts to Keep College Affordable

- We cannot talk about improving our state's economic future without providing a quality affordable college education for all New Yorkers
- Last year alone, **we/the Assembly**:
 - expanded the TAP program, making 30,000 more New Yorkers eligible
 - initiated the College Tuition Tax Credit Plan, helping working families cover the costs of higher education, providing an itemized tax deduction of up to \$10,000 – or an actual check for up to \$400 – for college costs (*from Viewpoints 2000/June 2000*)
 - increased aid to community colleges by \$125 per student (*from Viewpoints 2000/June 2000*)
 - funded over 200 new full-time faculty positions for SUNY and CUNY colleges, universities and community colleges
- Today's resolution builds on our efforts to keep college affordable for students from working families
- Only the Assembly's budget proposal offers a clear, effective plan to keep the college dream alive for students from working families