Ten Reasons to Support the CUNY Budget Investment Plan

1. There is widespread agreement that public higher education must be responsive to a global marketplace, to the demand for a highly skilled workforce, to the need to strengthen the state's economy, and to the importance of creating knowledge to help society. The necessary financing must be put into place to meet these urgent needs and expectations. The CUNY Investment Plan establishes a long-term financial framework to respond to marketplace demands.

2. CUNY and SUNY are required to develop and adopt a comprehensive Master Plan every four years, subject to the approval of the Board of Regents and forwarded to the governor. But there is no funding to support the Master Plan and its programmatic initiatives. The CUNY Investment Plan creates a way to fund the important initiatives in its Master Plan.

3. Legislative consideration of public higher education funding has traditionally been dominated by the need to restore proposed financial aid cuts, which inevitably leads to no-growth budgets. The CUNY Investment Plan breaks that cycle and offers a progressive approach to planning for necessary growth to meet increasing educational needs.

4. CUNY has demonstrated remarkable progress in recording its highest enrollment in 30 years while raising its academic standards, admitting better-prepared students, and enrolling more students from select public high schools. Teacher education test scores have dramatically improved, and award-winning students are competing successfully in state and national arenas. Performance counts! The CUNY Investment Plan rewards successful performance.

5. The state has demonstrated that planning and multi-year budgeting can lead to a robust, long-range capital program for construction and renovation projects. Bricks and mortar are essential to a successful university. Teaching and learning are no less vital. The CUNY Investment Plan outlines an effective, multi-year planning and budgeting process for the operating budget.

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6. State funding for student financial aid is generous in comparison to other states, but funding for operating expenses lags behind almost every other state in the country. The CUNY Investment Plan offers a more balanced approach to funding financial aid and operating budgets.

7. The current year-to-year budget cycle is vulnerable to economic downturns and, in the past, has led to large, unexpected tuition increases, which are harmful to students. The CUNY Investment Plan prevents sudden tuition spikes and creates a more predictable tuition schedule.

8. Insufficient and unstable state funding affects the quality of public higher education throughout New York. CUNY and SUNY are working collaboratively to improve higher education throughout the state. The CUNY Investment Plan suggests an approach that could benefit both CUNY and SUNY.

9. Public higher education can thrive only through a long-term partnership among its primary stakeholders—government, institutions, alumni, and students. The CUNY Investment Plan creates a new compact among the key constituencies and augers well for the stability and enhancement of public higher education.

10. The state is increasingly relying on tuition revenue to fund public higher education. The CUNY Investment Plan offers an economically efficient way to finance CUNY and SUNY by delineating shared responsibility among partners and creating opportunities to leverage funds.

The City University of New York is proposing an innovative approach to enable the financing of its Master Plan for the education of CUNY students. Under the long-term Investment Plan, financing would be shared by the state/city, the University (through internal efficiencies), philanthropic sources, enrollment growth, and modest, predictable tuition increases. Through this compact, the state would commit to fully funding the University's mandatory costs and funding a portion of the priorities in the Master Plan, including the hiring of more full-time faculty and support of research, academic enhancements, and student services. The maintenance of full financial aid is required for the success of this plan. No student in need of financial assistance will be put in harm's way. The revenue from the increased tuition would go exclusively toward funding CUNY investment initiatives, with recommendations from students and faculty, including elected representatives, about how the money should be invested.

For more information, please contact the Office of University Relations, The City University of New York, (212) 794-5317.

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