The Governor Gets A Chance To Boost State Support For Public Colleges

By BLAIRC HORNER • 17 HOURS AGO

Four years ago, state lawmakers approved a plan that changed its relationship with the state's public colleges and students. The plan contained two major changes: public college tuition would be raised automatically and the state would commit not to cut state support for those institutions and would not use the increased tuition to close budget holes.
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As part of the deal to increase tuition up to $300 annually, the state pledged to maintain its support. According to state officials, “In return, the State committed to maintain [the state and New York city university systems] current funding year-to-year – this preserved budgets for curriculum innovation and ensured students were not back filling State cuts.”

This component of the plan was a Maintenance of Effort (MOE) provision, which mandated the state provide a steady level of funding to public colleges that would not depend on revenue generated from tuition.

The idea was that this MOE should have allowed the State University of New York and the City University of New York to invest the funds generated by the tuition hikes toward expanded academic and student
support services.

But it turns out that there was a major caveat to the state's promise.

Buried in the fine print of the 2011 legislation was that the MOE was defined to mean that the state would spend no less than the total amount it spent the year before. Yet, annual inflation erodes the purchasing power of the dollar; in essence keeping state support at a steady level meant a cut. Moreover, the fine print also left vague what services would be covered by the MOE.

When the plan was approved in 2011, critics thought the result of annual tuition hikes would be a shift in the cost of attending public college from Albany to the students and their families. Sadly, it appears that they were right.

Tuition at state public colleges is expected to increase by as much as 42% by the time the law expires on July 1, 2016. While tuition has jumped dramatically, state support for SUNY and CUNY has remained largely flat. As a result, the cost to maintain SUNY and CUNY's services at the same level as it was in 2011 has increased by nearly $200 million combined.

The state made up the difference by using the increased tuition dollars, undermining its promise to students and their families. Eroding state support coupled with rising tuition has had an impact: Prior to the 2008 recession, the state paid more than half of SUNY's operating costs. Now student tuition and fees account for 64 percent of SUNY's operating costs and the state pays a mere 36 percent of those costs.

During that time, the state has not felt budgetary shortfalls: In fact, New York State's budget has grown from $134.8 billion in 2011 to $143.8 billion in 2015, roughly a 7.5 percent increase. That's right, while the state has spent 7.5 percent more than it did at the beginning of the Cuomo Administration, students have been forced to pay more and the state has shortchanged public colleges in the budget. Clearly, priorities have been elsewhere.

The effect has been to shift the burden of operating New York's public colleges from the state to college students and their families.

Lawmakers now understand the mistake in the MOE and have overwhelming approved a fix. The legislation requires the state to provide funding to cover all mandatory costs of both SUNY and CUNY. Those mandatory costs include items like utility bills, building rentals and other inflationary expenses incurred by both the state and city universities and the state university health science centers. The legislation has broad support: SUNY, CUNY, faculty and student groups all supported the bill and it passed the Senate 62-1 and passed Assembly 146-1.

Now the ball is in Governor Cuomo's court.
Don’t Fund Costs of Administration With Tuition, Higher-Ed Unions Urge

By DAN ROSENBLUM | Posted: Monday, July 27, 2015 5:45 pm

Unions representing staffers at the City University of New York and State University of New York urged Governor Cuomo last week to sign a bill that would require the state to maintain funding levels for rising administrative costs, instead of taking that money from tuition increases.

Claim Tuition Was Diverted

In 2011, Albany began phasing in five annual $300 tuition hikes for SUNY. That money was supposed to fund education initiatives, but the unions said it was instead used to fill in lapses in state funding. The “maintenance of effort” legislation, which overwhelmingly passed the State Senate and Assembly last month, would clarify that increasing costs for rents, utilities, equipment upgrades and employees’ raises and benefits wouldn’t come from students’ wallets.

The bill has been strongly backed by the Professional Staff Congress, which represents approximately 27,000 full-time, part-time and adjunct staffers at CUNY, and the United University Professions, which represents 35,000 faculty members at 29 SUNY campuses.

About 50 advocates turned up at a July 22 rally outside Baruch College in Manhattan, which was one of five events held statewide. PSC President Barbara Bowen said that it was unfair to “try to run a university on a shoestring” and that the legislation could help ensure that university budgets remain constant each year.

“The focus here is that it’s so destructive to CUNY and SUNY to start every year by having to fill a hole, and you never get ahead,” she said.

Ms. Bowen said even as enrollment has risen, CUNY has lost about 4,000 positions in recent years. “One effect of that is, that we just don’t have enough time to do what we’d like to do with students,” she said. “We don’t have enough time to give individual attention to students.”

The SUNY 2020 law that established the $1,500 tuition hikes is slated to expire next July. By then, student fees will have increased by 58 percent at CUNY and 42 percent at SUNY. From 2007-08 to
2014-15, combined state and city support for CUNY’s senior colleges fell from 62 percent of its revenue to 54 percent.

$59-Million Shortfall

Those mandatory costs averaged $79.5 million over the 2011 through 2016 fiscal years, while the state’s average funding for those was $20.5 million, leaving tuition costs to cover the shortfall, the PSC said.

The bill is expected to be sent to Mr. Cuomo’s desk around Aug. 1, according to a union spokesman. From then, he will have 10 business days to sign it into law. The Governor’s Office did not respond a request for comment on whether he would sign the bill.

“College is set to start in a few weeks and SUNY and CUNY students will again be paying more for tuition and fees this year,” said UUP President Frederick Kowal, who spoke in Albany. “Now it’s the state’s turn to pay its fair share.”

Assemblywoman Deborah J. Glick, a lead sponsor of the bill, said it was important for students to leave schools without being “burdened by a mortgage on their education.”

‘A True Leader’

“We need to be sure we build the intellectual capital that will make New York State a true leader across all of the other states,” she said.

Both universities and the New York Public Interest Research Group drafted memos supporting the proposal.

Those speaking last week were more complimentary of the Governor than K-12 education unions, whose relationship with him became heated after he backed proposals to expand charter schools, make Teacher evaluations more stringent and give a tax break to those donating to private schools. Ms. Bowen credited Mr. Cuomo for being in favor of gradually raising minimum wages for fast-food workers to $15 and for recently signing a bill to combat sexual assault at colleges statewide.

Challenge to Cuomo

“This is a real chance for our Governor to take a stand and continue that work to make New York, not just sufficient or just barely holding on in public higher education, but a leader,” she said.

AFL-CIO New York City Central Labor Council President Vincent Alvarez also said the state could lead by putting money back into higher education. “The product of education in SUNY and CUNY needs to be enhanced, supported and prioritized with subsequent and adequate and continuous funding,” he said.
Duncan: Colleges are falling short for millions of students. Debt-free degrees are just part of the solution.

By Nick Anderson  July 27

Education Secretary Arne Duncan argues that higher education is falling short for millions of students, failing to give them "what they need and deserve" — quality degrees at a reasonable cost.

In prepared remarks for an event Monday at the University of Maryland Baltimore County, Duncan argued that "debt-free degrees" are "only part of the solution" for reform of colleges and universities. The other part, he said, is outcomes.

Sometimes, he said, politicians focus too much on what college costs and not enough on what it delivers.

The event was scheduled to begin at 9:30 a.m. Duncan planned to appear with UMBC President Freeman A. Hrabowski III and with F. King Alexander, president of Louisiana State University; LaGuardia Community College President Gail Mellow; Scott Ralls, president of the North Carolina Community College System and incoming president of Northern Virginia Community College; Morgan State University President David Wilson; and State University of New York Chancellor Nancy Zimpher.

Alexander planned to touch on the same themes.

"We need to increase access and success, persistence and retention, and make sure our graduates walk away with little-to-no debt, and walk into fulfilling careers," the LSU president said in prepared remarks. "To reach this goal, we need to take a three-pronged approach that prioritizes outcomes, incentivizes states to maintain or increase their support of public universities, and ensures accountability through the regulatory process. ... Every university represented in this room is doing something right. That's why we're here. But looking at the national reality — the number of students defaulting, the number of students who aren't completing, and the number of students who never even start — makes it painfully clear that it's time to prioritize the big picture. It's time to make real change."

Here are excerpts from Duncan's speech:

"America's students know what they want out of college. They want an education that will set them on a path to success. They want control of their future, without decades of overwhelming debt. They want a college degree that will help them thrive independently, support a family, shape the world and contribute to their communities.

"For many students, that's not just a dream. For them, our nation's world-class colleges and universities and strong credential programs offer a clear path to economic security and success. For them, college offers a pivotal moment in their lives that
defined their future in profoundly positive ways.

"But unfortunately, for millions of other students, our higher education system just isn't delivering what they need, and deserve. As a nation, we can change that – and we must."

[...]

"There is a path to a higher education system that serves many more students much better. And continuing to make college more accessible and affordable – including more tuition-free and debt-free degrees – is part of that. But it's only part.

"If we confine the discussion to cost and debt, we will have failed. Because we will have only found better ways to pay for a system that fails far too many of our students.

"Make no mistake: Our administration will not let up in our efforts to help more students pay for college, to break the upward cycle of cost, and to crack down on bad actors that take advantage of students. And we will continue to strengthen our enforcement efforts.

"But as a nation, we must go further. We must reset the incentives that underpin the system so the focus is on the outcome that matters: completing a quality degree at a reasonable cost. And we must have the courage to embrace innovations that meet the needs of a student body that has changed enormously in recent decades."

[...]

"A spiral of cost and debt today threatens to take college, America’s engine of social mobility, and kick it into reverse gear ..."

"The need is urgent to rein in the cost of college, to create more tuition-free and zero-debt pathways, and to reverse the shocking slide in state support for higher education..."

"In the face of these challenges, I'm proud to say that our administration has taken unprecedented action."

[...]

"A lot of my friends here in Washington have been talking about the need for debt-free degrees. And they're right. Students must have many more pathways to tuition- and debt-free degrees... But cost and debt are just one part of this fight.

"Student debt is a burden for too many students, but most ultimately repay their loans, and for those who get their degree, college proves an excellent investment. By some estimates, a bachelor's degree increases lifetime earnings on average by about one million dollars.

"The degree students truly can't afford is the one they don’t complete, or that employers don't value."
"We must shift incentives at every level to focus on student success, not just access. When students win, everyone wins. But when they lose, every part of the system should share responsibility.

"Today, only students, families and taxpayers lose when students don’t succeed— that makes no sense. Institutions must be held accountable when they get paid by students and taxpayers but fail to deliver a quality education. So should states and accreditors who are responsible to oversee them under the law.

"By the same token, schools should be rewarded for doing the right thing – like taking on students who are struggling and helping them succeed."

[...]

"The challenge before us is enormous. But I take heart from the genius of visionaries like those gathered in this room. I believe that with your leadership, and with collective courage and a commitment, our nation will advance the work of perfecting the promise of higher education.

"This is not just an economic imperative, but a moral necessity. Ensuring the opportunity of college success for all students who are willing to work hard is a core tenet of the American covenant.

"As President Obama told the NAACP earlier this month, ‘Justice is not only the absence of oppression, it is the presence of opportunity.’

"The decisions we face here will define our generation. In the choices we make, we will decide what kind of country we are, and who gets to share in the nation’s success."
Driver, 22, charged for leaving scene of Staten Island crash that killed 19-year-old woman: cops

BY ALIZA CHASAN, EDGAR SANDOVAL, TINA MOORE / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS /
Published: Monday, July 27, 2015, 8:52 AM / Updated: Tuesday, July 28, 2015, 7:06 AM

Alvaro Jorge, 63, holds a photograph of his daughter Alize Jorge, 19, who was killed Sunday night in a...
A man with a checkered driving history and no license ran a red light and smacked into a traffic light pole, killing one of his passengers — a 19-year-old woman — before running from the Staten Island scene.

The driver, Hasim Smith, 22, later went to a hospital complaining of chest pains. He was charged with leaving the scene of a fatal accident.

Alize Jorge, an aspiring accountant and sophomore at Borough of Manhattan Community College, died at the scene. Her father was devastated, telling the Daily News he always tried to protect his daughter.

"I was always telling her, 'Go out with responsible people,' " said Alvaro Jorge, 63, a retired state corrections officer. "I'd ask, 'Let me see some identification. Who are you?' She'd say, 'Dad, no.' "

Alize Jorge, who was sitting in the backseat, was found in the trunk of the mangled Mitsubishi after the Sunday night wreck, cops said. Her friend, Porsha Richardson, 18, was tossed from the vehicle and listed in critical condition, a police source said. All three people in the car were from Staten Island.

Mayor de Blasio on Monday said a key element of the city's Vision Zero initiative has been to exact tougher penalties on unsafe drivers.

"I think this is why we have Vision Zero," he said. "We have, I think, over the last year and a half, steadily increased the penalties for drivers who have killed people and injured people grievously."
Hasim Smith's 2004 Mitsubishi Eclipse lost control and slammed into a light pole near the intersection of Richmond Hill Ave., witnesses said.

NYPD records show 127 people have been killed in motor vehicle crashes citywide this year. That's a 6% drop from the same period a year ago, when 135 were killed.

De Blasio said parents should talk to their kids about staying out of the cars of unsafe drivers.

"I've certainly had this conversation with my children to really be careful who you get in a car with," de Blasio said.

Smith was traveling north on Richmond Ave about 10:30 p.m. Sunday when he ran a light at Richmond Hill Road in New Springville. He told cops he swerved to avoid another vehicle when he slammed into the pole. Cops say there was no indication alcohol was involved in the crash.

"I've seen a lot of crashes, but I've never seen anyone's body fly out of a car like that," said witness Justin Elnahrwy, 19.

State Department of Motor Vehicles spokesman Joe Morrissey said Smith's license was suspended nine times for failure to pay fines and answer a summons. It was revoked in October 2013.

Smith was charged in two other crashes that left people injured, records show. He was fleeing from cops in February when he slid on ice and hit a parked vehicle that struck a woman who was cleaning snow off her car, court records show. Smith ran off. The woman suffered minor injuries. Smith told cops he fled because his license was suspended.
He was charged in June 2014 with leaving an accident that caused injury after colliding with oncoming traffic while also fleeing cops, records show.

Smith was also arrested in 2014 as part of a drug takedown dubbed "Operation Jersey Boys." He was charged with conspiracy and criminal sale of a controlled substance for allegedly selling cocaine. The case is ongoing.

The dead woman's dad said his daughter was just getting a ride home from a friend's birthday party.

"I'm numb," the father said. "I have not been able to sleep."
Poet creates first class for transgender poetry

BY CORINNE SEGAL  July 27, 2015 at 5:39 PM EDT

Listen to Trace Peterson read her poem “AFTER BEFORE AND AFTER.”

Trace Peterson, a poet at the forefront of the push for transgender representation in poetry, will soon pioneer what she says is the country’s first course in transgender poetry.

The course, which she will teach at Hunter College this fall, is part of an ongoing effort by Peterson and other poets to create visibility for transgender people as well as a literary context for their work, Peterson said. That context is lacking in the worlds of literature and academia, especially for poetry, she said.

“Literature departments and studies of literature are very comfortable approaching transgender subject matter as theory, or as types of metaphor. But there’s very little study of literature by transgender people,” she said.

But that has the potential to change as new publications and conferences move to create spaces where transgender poets can be heard, she said. Peterson is editor and publisher of the journal EOAGH and co-editor of the anthology Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics, both of which publish work by transgender poets. Since Troubling the Line was published in 2013, at least 10 of its authors have published a first book of poems, she said.
Other publications carrying that mission forward include Writing the Walls Down, which centers on transgender and queer writers of color, and Them, a journal focusing on poetry by transgender authors. Peterson also successfully lobbied this year to include a category for transgender women in VIDA's annual count of women working in the literary arts, and the Lambda Literary Awards added a category dedicated to transgender poetry for the first time ever this year.

Poetry has provided an important space for Peterson to express herself, she wrote in a personal poetics statement published in Troubling the Line. “Before transition, poetry offered to me the possibility of trying on different versions of myself, a way of channeling possible selves through associated chains of sound, imagery, and thought,” she wrote.

Peterson described her poem “AFTER BEFORE AND AFTER,” which you can listen to above, as a “love letter to trans women.” The poem deconstructs a common narrative that scapegoates trans women for causing various ills of civilization, a narrative that Peterson said is all too common.

“I was trying to reverse the narrative that trans women are symptoms or metaphors for various problems, that we are somehow outside the human or unlovable,” she told the NewsHour in an email. “Thinking of myself for the first time as an author of poems years ago helped me begin to take myself seriously not just as a poet, but as a woman. It helped me be unafraid to defy all those secondhand narratives and respect myself enough to show up for my own life. And the friendship of other trans women also helped me do that.”

**AFTER BEFORE AND AFTER**

I've been freed from inside the Fall of Rome, my contract disrupted. Civilization will not descend without my bet against it rising, a weather balloon that hangs against a vast
usurped sky. A carrier pigeon, to be, carries me. And from here I can find the edge of the cunning, supposedly clear window that divides us from the world of Michael Kors, that divides a kiss from its aftertaste. A coda is a beginning. After before and after, humane enclosures air whips through with a taste for blood oranges and secret unpoliced temporal lace have been spread out imagining possible goddesses in bed. What's free about a woman's stubble, what's enhanced delivering an urgent note across a field of blue.

Trace Peterson is editor/publisher of EOAGH, co-editor of Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics (Nightboat Books, 2013) and author of Since I Moved In (Chax Press, 2007).
Tax issues shouldn’t affect naturalization process, as long as you comply with reporting requirements

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS / Tuesday, July 28, 2015, 8:33 AM

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If a permanent U.S. resident earns sufficient income in a given year, they must file tax returns for that
Q I want to become a U.S. citizen. I became a permanent resident in 2013. Since my wife wasn't working and I didn't have work permission, we didn't start filing tax returns until 2014 (for the 2013 tax year). Will I have a problem naturalizing?

My wife petitioned for me and I became a permanent resident in December 2013. I want to apply to naturalize under the three-year rule for the spouse of a U.S. citizen.

Gabriel, Brooklyn

A If you complied with U.S. tax reporting requirements, tax issues won't be a concern. As the spouse of a U.S. citizen, you must have met your tax-filing obligations for the three years (instead of the usual five) prior to filing your naturalization application. You can apply three months prior to having three years permanent residence in September 2016. If you earned sufficient income in 2015, you'll need to file for that tax year.

Failure to comply with U.S. tax laws shows a lack of good moral character. Complying with tax laws, however, doesn't necessarily mean that you filed a tax return. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services will insist on seeing tax returns only for years where the amount of your income required you do so. Unlike the rules for most green card applications, your financial standing has no impact on your right to naturalize. Even people on public assistance can naturalize.

Q My U.S. citizen daughter will turn 21 in September. How soon after that can she file for a green card for me?

Everton Hodges, New York

A Immediately. She need not wait. As the parent of a U.S. citizen age 21 or older, you qualify for a green card without regard to the immigrant visa quotas. If an immigration officer inspected you when you last entered the United States, you can include your green card application when your daughter petitions for you. If you were not inspected at entry, you still may get a green card, but the process is more complicated.

Allan Wernick is an attorney and director of the City University of New York's Citizenship Now! project. Send questions and comments to Allan Wernick, New York Daily News, 4 New York Plaza, New York, NY 10004 or email to questions@allanwernick.com. Follow him on Twitter @awernick.
GUEST COMMENTARY: Competency Based Education could ease hassle, cost of student transfers

BY MICHAEL HIGHSMITH  20 hrs ago

Everyone's first love works out perfectly, right?

Of course it doesn't.

The same may be said of the decision that students make in selecting a college. More than a third of the 3.6 million students who entered college in the fall of 2008 transferred to other colleges or universities over the six years that followed, according to a National Student Clearinghouse Research Center report.

I was a transfer myself. After attending Belmont University in Tennessee, I had a change of heart about my career and found that Belmont wasn't the school for me. I transferred to Saint Louis University where I have found happiness over the past two and a half years.

This process was not easy. I believe that I speak for millions of other transfer students when I say that it was a whole lot more difficult than it ought to be.

Students transferring between universities face a wide range of issues and frustrations. For example, I remember taking the exact same Intro to Economics course during back-to-back semesters. Only two classes from my first semester actually fulfilled specific graduation requirements at SLU.

I was fortunate enough to overcome those setbacks. Many students aren't so lucky. Students transferring from community colleges, for instance, often face far larger hurdles.

Last year the City University of New York released a study revealing that more than 10 percent of community college students lost nearly all of their course credits during the transfer process. Forcing them to start over drastically reduced success rates and ratcheted up the cost of their education.
According to David Monaghan, a sociology Ph.D. candidate and coauthor of the study, the problem does not lie in what community colleges are doing to prepare students but rather in the transfer process itself.

"If there's a need for policy change that's indicated by the study, it's not somehow penalizing community colleges or looking at them as doing something particularly wrong academically," Monaghan says. "It's looking at this choke point of transfer and seeing what can be done to make that more doable."

So how do we cut the costs created when students transfer between universities?

One solution could be a shift from awarding credit based on the amount of time a student spends in a class to awarding credit for students demonstrating what they actually know. This is known as Competency Based Education (CBE). While the traditional college consists of 15-week courses, students under a CBE program are able to receive credit in whatever amount of time it takes them to learn the materials. CBE programs are popping up in Big Ten schools such as the University of Michigan and Purdue. Last year the Missouri Community College Association, in conjunction with the Missouri Department of Higher Education, became part of a CBE initiative along with 13 other institutions across the nation.

Universities are hesitant to accept credits that could put struggling students in high-level courses. Repetition is a necessity if a student hasn't learned the proper material, but CBE could help maintain quality control by proving whether or not they are prepared.

By allowing students to demonstrate what they know, CBE can drastically diminish the number of students trapped in needlessly duplicative courses and can award credit fairly for courses taken outside of an institution.

Transfer students aren't going away, and CBE programs could be the next step. While they will require a fundamental change in our view of education, take it from a transfer student who has been through the hassle of repeating coursework when I say the improvement in efficiency and affordability will be worth it.

*Micahel Highsmith is an intern at the Show-Me Institute.*
LIFE-LONG FRIENDSHIP

Study: The kinds of friendships you have in your 20s and 30s predicts your well-being later in life

A new study shows that when it comes to friendship, it's quantity over quality that matters in your 20s—and vice versa in your 30s.

That pattern turns out to be a predictor of psychological well-being later in life, and it happens to be one that comes relatively naturally to many of us.

"Earlier on in life, we're more interested in exploring and acquiring as much information and knowledge about the world as we can. We do that in part by socializing with an array of people," says Paul Duberstein, a psychiatry professor at the University of Rochester in New York. "As we reorient our eyes and move into our 30s, we begin to clip the wings of our new friends in order to focus on quality."
network. The amount of people and the effort we spend on people in the network are more concentrated and of higher quality.”

The effects of this shift are documented in a study co-authored by Duberstein and published in *Psychology and Aging* in March. The study spanned 30 years and followed about 100 University of Rochester students from the 1970s.

At 20 and 30, the participants were asked to record their daily interactions with others, and to score them on intimacy and unpleasantness. Decades later, the subjects answered questions about their psychological well-being, including loneliness and depression, and the quality of their friendships. The researchers found that the quantity of friends at 20 predicted well-being in midlife, while at age 30 it was quality that was a better predictor.

In fact the study showed that having a higher quantity...
at 30 did not predict later well-being, that “more frequent social activity at age 30 was associated with marginally worse psychological outcomes at age 50.” The authors suggest that having too many friends at 30 could actually prevent you from developing meaningful relationships. On the flip side, just meeting more people in your 20s, regardless of the depth of your interactions, has its own merits.

As the researchers admit, the sample size in this study was limited—the data was collected from educated, mostly white people who were privileged enough to attend an American university in the 1970s. But Duberstein predicts a wider and more diverse study would produce similar results.

There’s another wrinkle for social scientists to consider, though. As study co-author Cheryl Carmichael, assistant professor of psychology at Brooklyn College, City University of New York, tells Quartz, the recently published research focused on face-to-face interactions, and was largely conducted before the explosion of social interactions we conduct every day using the electronic devices we carry around in our pockets.

Soon, with better data collection and more ways to socialize, we can expect a more nuanced look at how our friendships affect us later in life, she and Duberstein predict.

*Image by Ippei Suzuki on Flickr, licensed under CC-BY-2.0.*