

---

# The Post-Standard

## **SUNY looks for a big role Upstate**

**Board chair says university a major part of economic revitalization plans.**

Monday, June 23, 2008

**By Rick Moriarty**  
**Staff writer**

The State University of New York system will play an "indispensable role" in revitalizing the Upstate economy even as it absorbs a \$50 million cut in state funding, said Carl Hayden, chairman of the SUNY board of trustees.

"If you take a look at the map of New York and see where the 64 campuses of the state university are located, you will see that we have a presence in every nook and cranny of the state," Hayden said in an interview with The Post-Standard.

"We also are, along with our counterparts in the private sector, the primary developers of intellectual capital. And the future belongs to those who are able to generate and nurture and commercialize intellectual capital. That's what the business community demands."

Hayden, an Elmira lawyer who was appointed chairman of the board of trustees by former Gov. Eliot Spitzer in October, will be the keynote speaker at the annual meeting of the University Hill Corp. Thursday at Drumlins in DeWitt. Nearly 200 people are expected.

The corporation is a private, nonprofit organization formed by the Metropolitan Development Association in 1963. It coordinates planning and development in the University Hill area, home to Syracuse University and three hospitals, including SUNY's Upstate Medical University. Upstate, with 6,570 employees, is Syracuse's largest employer.

SUNY - the largest comprehensive university system in the county, with 417,500 students - is feeling the state's fiscal pinch. It will receive \$50 million less from the state next year.

Hayden said Gov. David Paterson initially wanted to make a \$150 million cut in the state's contribution to the SUNY system. But a reduction of \$50 million, or 3.6 percent, was agreed upon after "very, very extensive, frank and sincere negotiations," he said.

Each campus will decide where to reduce its spending. But SUNY officials said likely ways are by not filling open faculty, non-faculty and support positions; reducing or delaying library expenditures; delaying academic

and research programs; instituting energy conservation efforts; paying closer attention to travel expenses and delaying or reducing vehicle purchases; and postponing upgrades to administrative systems.

Spitzer had planned to boost the state's funding of SUNY's research centers to raise the system's national standing. But fiscal constraints faced by the state in a slowing economy resulted in budget cuts rather than increases.

Hayden said he was not sure what effect the cuts will have, at least in the short run, on the state's plan to boost SUNY's national standing. But the goal remains the same, he said.

"I have to tell you that Gov. Paterson is, I believe, every bit as committed to elevating the standing of the state university," said Hayden, former chancellor of the state Board of Regents. "But he's preoccupied with bailing water, and we've got to right our fiscal ship before moving forward with any of the initiatives valued by the governor or the legislative leadership. We recognize that."

Even during bad economic times, though, Hayden said the state would be wise to invest in research at SUNY's campuses. He cited the turnaround at Corning Inc., which found new markets for its high-tech glass after the technology bubble burst in 2000, seriously cutting sales of the company's fiber-optic products.

"What Corning did, in addition to the usual mechanics of downsizing, was to increase its spending on research and development," he said. "I think people understand that in a technology-driven economy, the winners are going to be the people who invest in research in both good times and bad."

One of the major challenges to growing the Upstate economy is holding onto its skilled workers, particularly the graduates of the region's many colleges and universities.

He said the state should consider requiring college graduates who received state loans, grants, scholarships or other taxpayer assistance to work in the state for some period if employment is available to them.

"Subsidized college graduates are our leading export," said Hayden. "I really think we ought to have a conversation about whether it would be appropriate to say that we would expect a young person who uses public money to attend the state's public university to commit to spending some period of time in the state. We haven't had that conversation yet, but I think it would be a useful one. No matter how it comes out, I think it's a conversation that should take place."

Rick Moriarty can be reached at 470-3148 or [rmoriarty@syracuse.com](mailto:rmoriarty@syracuse.com).

© 2008 The Post-Standard. Used with permission.

Copyright 2008 syracuse.com. All Rights Reserved.