



THE STATE UNIVERSITY *of* NEW YORK

**University
Faculty Senate**

March 31, 2010

State University Plaza
Albany, New York
12246

1 800 547 1548
518 320 1376
fax - 518 320 1543

[www.suny.edu/
facultysenate](http://www.suny.edu/facultysenate)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President

Kenneth O'Brien
Brockport

Immediate Past President
Carl Wiezalis
Upstate

**Vice President
and Secretary**

Norman Goodman
Stony Brook

William Lanford
Albany

James McElwaine
Purchase

Rochelle Mozzlin
Optometry

Barbara Brabetz
Cobleskill

Maryellen Keefe
Maritime

Edward Alfonsin
Potsdam, Parliamentarian

**STANDING
COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Awards

Sandra Michael
Binghamton

Governance

Sharon Cramer
Buffalo State

Graduate and Research
Mark Noll
Brockport

Operations

Ron Sarner
SUNYIT

Student Life

Ray Krisciunas
Canton

Undergraduate
Kane Gillespie
Stony Brook

**FACULTY SENATE BULLETIN
Co-Editors**

Norman Goodman
Joe Hildreth

Executive Assistant
Carol Donato

Honorable David Paterson
Governor, State of New York
Executive Chamber
Albany, New York 12224

Honorable John Sampson
Democrat Conference Leader
New York State Senate
Albany, New York 12247

Honorable Sheldon Silver
Speaker
New York State Assembly
Albany, New York 12248

Honorable Dean Skelos
Minority Leader
New York State Senate
Albany, New York 12247

Honorable Brian Kolb
Minority Leader
New York State Assembly
Albany, New York 12248

Dear State Leaders:

After a long informational process that fully engaged the members of our University Faculty Senate, the Executive Committee today passed the attached resolution endorsing the Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act. This followed the full Senate's passage in January of a resolution requesting restoration of the reductions recommended in the Governor's Executive Budget.

That SUNY faculty would argue for the restoration of state support comes as no surprise, especially given the total reductions in the past two years of almost a half billion dollars. This unprecedentedly rapid disinvestment in your state university, the very agency that holds the promise of building the human capital necessary for economic recovery, is truly unfortunate.

Today you gentlemen have the unenviable task of balancing extraordinary demands for public support at the very time that the resources available to meet those demands are declining. But, act you must; the state must have and will have a budget. The question is whether that final budget will so hamper SUNY that it cannot do the job it is capable of doing to begin rebuilding the state economy.

Since the introduction of the PHEEIA, the SUNY administration has championed the bill as a way to "reset" the relationship between your state university and the traditional oversight provided by agencies of state government. While you may think that this is not the ideal time for a major revision of that relationship, it is the moment available to us. As the Chancellor indicated in her unequivocal letter of March 25, she is willing to work with you, with staff, with anyone you choose to protect the investments, human and material, the state has already made in SUNY.

March 31, 2010

Page 2

We strongly endorse her identification of SUNY's immediate needs, and since we have been gathering information from across the system, we can assure you that if there is no significant relief, draconian cuts in personnel and programs must follow. Stony Brook University, for example, will lose over 600 classes as a consequence of reducing its staff by 400. With fewer classes from which to choose and fewer seats available in classrooms, many students will find their graduation dates inevitably delayed. Fredonia, at the other end of the state, has begun planning for a three-year cycle of staff reductions, including teaching staff, which while different in scale and specific number, will have similar consequences for students.

Most simply stated, The State University of New York, your state university, has reached the point where its campuses have no more flexibility to juggle their budgets, no more reserves upon which to draw, no more options but to cut – and cut significantly – the services that more than four hundred thousand currently enrolled students expect us to deliver.

There is an alternative. We urge you to accept Chancellor Zimpher's offer to work closely with you to create a set of policies, procedures and funding levels that will allow SUNY to become a critical part of the solution to the problems we all face in New York rather than one more impediment to recovery.

In closing, I hope you understand how much we appreciate the extraordinary difficulties you face in crafting a budget for New York that maintains critical services while offering modest investments for the future. But, to those of us in SUNY, we are the future. As for the present, we invite you to come down to the Well area in the Legislative Office Building on Tuesday, April 13 between 11:00am and 1:00pm to see for yourselves the work of some of SUNY's extraordinary students. That is where you will find more than 100 posters crafted by undergraduates from more than thirty campuses that illustrate their current research projects.

Sincerely,



Kenneth P. O'Brien
President
SUNY University Faculty Senate

Xc: Chancellor Zimpher
Phil Smith, President, UUP
Members of the New York State Assembly
Members of the New York State Senate