



THE PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION EMPOWERMENT AND INNOVATION ACT

GOOD FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Community Colleges play a vital role in the State University system and the communities they serve across the state. During the economic slowdown, New Yorkers are turning to community colleges in greater numbers than ever before to obtain a higher education, upgrade their skills or learn new skills. The Public Higher Education Innovation and Empowerment Act will enable SUNY's community colleges to better serve their students and the communities they serve.

With community college FTE enrollment at an all time high (increasing an estimated 37% over the last ten years), there is an urgent and continuing need for greater transfer capacity across the SUNY system. Over half of community college graduates look to transfer to a four year school. When the SUNY/CUNY Empowerment Act is implemented, it is estimated that SUNY's university centers will be able to accept over 20,000 new students above current planned growth. This will have an immediate, positive impact on community college students who seek to continue with their higher education studies.

Community Colleges should receive greater support for their great work in creating academic initiatives that impact New York's workforce and education pipeline. The SUNY/CUNY Empowerment Act allows SUNY to become more responsible for its own finances and with this greater control SUNY, as a system, can better support these important ventures.

While community colleges have the ability to set their own tuition, four year schools do not. The legislation provides the University with the ability to implement a rational, predictable tuition policy for four year schools. This in turn will assist with the development of a tuition policy at all of SUNY's 64 campuses.

In addition, the SUNY/CUNY Empowerment Act expands the options available to finance and construct capital facilities. When enacted, not-for-profit affiliates of a community college may finance and construct capital facilities through DASNY, and each community college may finance and construct dormitories, for students, faculty and staff, directly through DASNY. By taking advantage of this lower rate of financing, many community colleges will have the opportunity to pursue residence halls and other entrepreneurial ventures when before it may not have been feasible financially.