



The State University of New York
Student Assembly

SUNY's Federal Priorities

The State University of New York is the largest comprehensive system of higher education in the United States, with 64 college and university campuses located within 30 miles of every home, school and business in the state. In 2014-15, SUNY served nearly 1.3 million students, including nearly 600,000 in credit bearing courses and programs and nearly 700,000 through continuing education and community outreach programs. SUNY students and faculty across the state make significant contributions to research and discovery, resulting in nearly \$1 billion of externally-sponsored activity each year. There are 3 million SUNY alumni worldwide and one in three New Yorkers with a college degree are SUNY alumni.

SUNY's federal priorities build on our commitment to promoting affordable, high-quality educational opportunities, expanding access to college, and providing the support necessary to drive students to on-time completion and long-term success.

Increase the Pell Grant Maximum

The Pell Grant is the foundation of federal student aid, making college more affordable for millions of students. More than 170,000 SUNY students receive Pell Grants, totaling \$639 million in aid annually. Even with SUNY's four-year tuition being the lowest in the northeast – and a robust New York State financial aid program – Pell is critical to ensuring access and supporting success for our highest need students. ***SUNY strongly supports raising the total maximum Pell Grant award to \$5,935.***

Reduce Student Loan Interest Rates

Despite SUNY's commitment to an affordability, many students still need to borrow funds to invest in their future. ***SUNY supports reducing student loan interest rates to better reflect program costs and eliminate profits for the federal government AND allowing borrowers with high-interest loans to refinance at lower current rates.***

Support Federal Work Study

The Federal Work Study (FWS) program provides funds for part-time employment to help students finance the cost of college. Many FWS opportunities provide students the chance to find employment in areas of interest and relevance to their major, giving them practical work experience. More than 11,500 SUNY students receive FWS awards totaling \$22.3 million annually. ***SUNY supports a Federal Work Study request of \$990 million in FY 2017.***

Reinstate Year-Round Pell

Many students exhaust their annual Pell eligibility after just two semesters, making it difficult for them to afford summer courses and therefore less likely to graduate early or on-time. A year-round program would allow students to receive a third semester of Pell in a single academic year. The outdated two-semester limit does not meet the needs of today's students who are looking for a customizable experience that better meets their needs and the needs of our workforce. ***SUNY supports H.R. 3180, the Flexible Pell Grant for 21st Century Students Act.***

Ensure Campus Safety

SUNY has a long and unwavering commitment to ensuring student safety and we were proud to be the first university system to stand in support of the Campus Accountability and Safety Act. Partnering with New York State, SUNY has enacted a progressive set of system-wide policies to keep students safe on and around our campuses, and fully supports federal legislation further protecting our students. ***SUNY supports H.R. 1310, the Campus Accountability and Safety Act, which promotes a comprehensive set of reforms focused on transparency, reporting, and prevention when colleges deal with sexual assault and harassment.***