



SUNY Office of Government Relations Newsletter

Dear Friend,

Welcome to the May edition of the SUNY Office of Government Relations Newsletter.

The Fiscal Year 2025-26 New York State Enacted Budget has once again proved to be historic for SUNY. With continued support from Governor Hochul and the State Legislature, the budget reinforces SUNY's role as a driver of opportunity, economic development, innovation, and student success across every corner of New York.

As we celebrate a third consecutive historic state budget, SUNY and the entire higher education sector continue to advocate in Washington for positive outcomes in the pending reconciliation package as well as the upcoming FY 2026 appropriations bills that are advancing through Congress now. SUNY is grateful for our bipartisan champions in the NYS Congressional Delegation who are working hard to ensure SUNY students are protected from harm and that we continue to advance our efforts in groundbreaking research and providing an affordable pathway for so many students.

As we conclude another academic year, our team has been busy with campus visits, celebrating commencement season, and wrapping up the legislative session in Albany. These moments are powerful reminders of SUNY's impact across the state and the importance of continuing to advocate for policies that support access, affordability, and excellence in public higher education.

Sincerely,

Will Schwartz
Vice Chancellor for Government Relations



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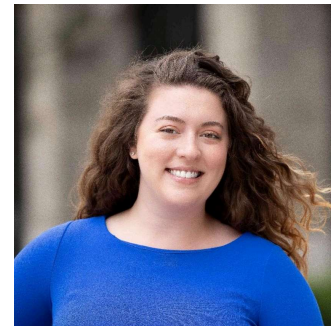
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SUNY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

- Chancellor King Announces Launch of the SUNY Healthcare Educator Scholarship Program [Read more](#)
- Statement from Chancellor King and the SUNY Board Trustees on the Enacted FY 2025-26 State Budget [Read more](#)
- SUNY Announces \$114 Million in New Funding to Support Students, Faculty, and Staff at All SUNY State-Operated Campuses [Read more](#)
 - Capital Region Campuses: **More Than \$10 Million** in New Funding
 - North Country Campuses: **\$3.3 Million** in New Funding
 - Hudson Valley Area Campuses: **Nearly \$3.8 Million** in New Funding
 - Greater Rochester Region Campuses: **Nearly \$4 Million** in New Funding
 - Western New York Campuses: **More Than \$20 Million** in New Funding
 - New York City Campuses: **Nearly \$12 Million** in New Funding
 - Long Island Campuses: **\$37 Million** in New Funding
 - Southern Tier Campuses: **Nearly \$8.8 Million** in New Funding
 - Central New York Campuses: **More Than \$28 Million** in New Funding
- Chancellor King Announces SUNY Campuses Ready to Launch Governor Hochul's Free Community College Program for Fall 2025 [Read more](#)
- Chancellor King Celebrates Recipients of Third Annual SUNY/OMH Scholarship Program. [Read more](#)
- Chancellor King and SUNY Board of Trustees Unveil Plans to Keep Moving SUNY, and New York State, Forward. [Read more](#)
- Governor Hochul Announces Expanded Access to Affordable Education for Veterans. [Read more](#)

TRIVIA

What was the original name of SUNY's office building? Scroll to the bottom to find out!

H. Carl McCall SUNY Building

The Castle

Delaware & Hudson Building

A LOOK BACK

Fiscal Year 2025-26 Enacted State Budget Highlights

Thank you to Governor Kathy Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, along with Higher Education Committee Chairs Senator Toby Ann Stavisky and Assemblymember Alicia Hyndman, and all of our SUNY champions in the State Legislature, for their historic investment and continued commitment to public higher education. Due to their leadership, every State-operated campus has received at least a 30% increase in operating aid over the last three years.

The FY 2025-26 enacted state budget included:

- \$114 million in operating aid for state-operated campuses
- \$28.2 million for SUNY Reconnect to provide free tuition, fees, books, and supplies, after applicable financial aid, for adult learners ages 25-55 years old without a college degree, helping more New Yorkers earn an associate's degree in high-demand fields at our Community Colleges.
- \$12 million to expand ASAP and ACE
- \$8 million in additional operating aid for community colleges (the first time in decades that community colleges have received two consecutive years of operating aid increases)
- Maintain the 100% community college floor
- \$2.5 million for EOP

Capital:

- \$550 million for critical maintenance
- \$450 million for Upstate Medical University
- \$450 million for Downstate Medical University, bringing the two-year total to \$750 million (see Governor Hochul's announcement of the Downstate Community Advisory Board recommendations [here](#))
- \$300 million for the New York State Innovation Fund research capital investment
- \$200 million for thermal energy networks at public and state-owned buildings
- \$131 million to match the local sponsor share for community colleges
- \$90 million for the Empire AI Consortium
- \$60 million for flexible capital

- \$25 million to establish the SUNY Green Energy Loan Fund

2025 SUNY State of the University Address

On May 21, Chancellor King delivered his third annual State of the University Address, outlining SUNY's continued investments in students, faculty, staff, and research despite nation-wide cuts higher education is currently facing. In addition, Chancellor King announced new initiatives to expand programs to help students succeed, while creating new paths forward to bolster research, advance diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels, and grow SUNY's role as an economic driver for the state and our students.

SUNY will advance a series of initiatives in the coming year to help empower students, invest in communities, and move New York forward. This includes:

- Expanding ethical AI education and workforce development by connecting SUNY's university centers with regional comprehensive colleges and community colleges.
- Closing the internship gap for SUNY's Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) students.
- Expanding ASAP and ACE college completion initiatives to reach 7,000 students this fall, up from 4,200, on the path to 10,000 students in two years.
- Piloting evening and weekend childcare at community colleges.
- Promoting the Governor's free community college program through SUNY Reconnect and helping community colleges with funding to cover equipment and other one-time needs to handle the anticipated increase in enrollment in high-demand, high-cost programs.

Thank you to elected officials, campus representatives, presidents, and other distinguished guests who attended this event. Your ongoing support is crucial to SUNY's continued success.

See the full transcript, policy book, and video [here](#). See more photos [here](#).



Empire AI Briefing

On Monday, May 19, Will Schwartz, Vice Chancellor for Government Relations, Melur K. "Ram" Ramasubramanian, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost, and Robert J. Harrison, Interim Executive Director at

Empire AI, hosted a legislative briefing on the Empire AI project, which will be hosted at the University at Buffalo. They were joined by Senate Internet and Technology Committee Chair Kristen Gonzalez and Assembly Science and Technology Committee Chair Steve Otis along with other members and staff. SUNY is at the forefront of shaping how AI is integrated into higher education, workforce development, and research, ensuring that New York remains a leader in AI research and innovation.





Campus Visits

This month, the OGR team visited three of our great campuses: **SUNY Geneseo**, **SUNY Maritime College**, and **Binghamton University**.

On May 2, Director of Government Relations Maria Volpe-McDermott toured **SUNY Geneseo** with campus leadership. Maria explored the brand-new \$40 million Milne Library, the first building on campus to fully eliminate the use of fossil fuels, as well as Geneseo's Pelletron accelerator. She also joined other SUNY Geneseo alumni to speak to current political science students about their career journey.



On May 14, Assistant Director of Government Relations Sydney Renwick joined FDNY Commissioner Robert Tucker, Assistant Commissioner of External Affairs Jim Harding, and Chief of Marine Operations Francis Simpson on a tour of **SUNY Maritime**'s ship, the Empire State VII. The Empire State VII is a National Security Multi-Mission Vessel built to respond to national disasters and outfitted as a world-class training vessel. As this year's class heads out for their Summer Sea Term, we know SUNY Maritime provides students with unique experiential learning opportunities that prepare them for all facets of the maritime transportation industry.



On May 22, Whitney Riggs, Director of Federal Relations, visited **Binghamton University** to learn more about the University's NSF Engines award and other technology advancements Binghamton is leading. Whitney toured the main campus, the Johnson City Campus and spent time in the Innovative Technologies Complex to see Binghamton's work in battery storage firsthand.

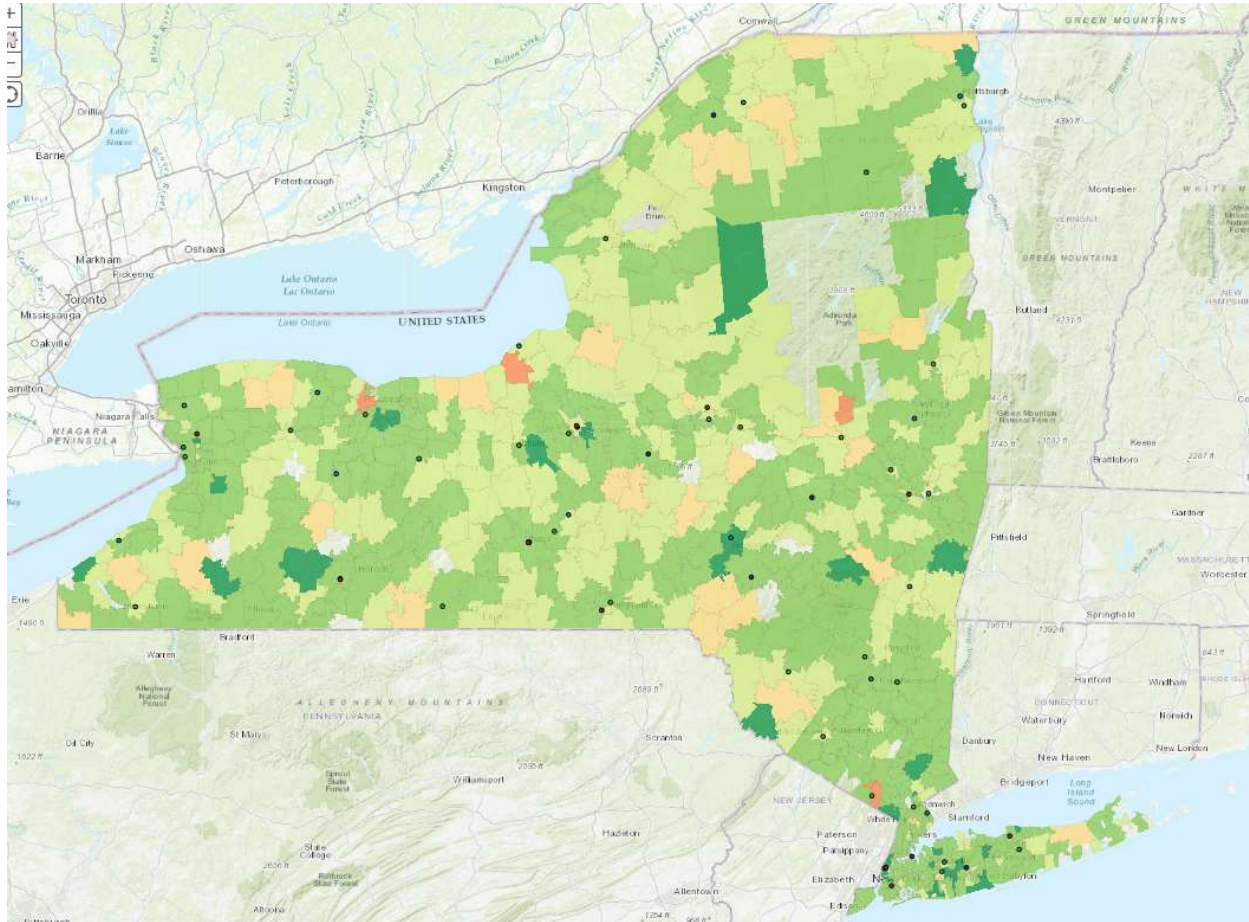


FAFSA Update

Please encourage your local school districts to ensure that students and their families are completing the FAFSA in order to be eligible for financial aid.

Through May 30, 2025, the data reflects that:

- **57.9% of the estimated class of 2025 in New York has completed a FAFSA.**
- Nationally, 51.7% of the estimated class of 2025 have submitted a FAFSA. New York is now in 6th place in the country. (Tennessee is #1 at 65.2%)
- See how New York districts are doing on this interactive map [here](#).
- Find resources for applying for financial aid [here](#).



Percent FAFSA Completion:

Percent FAFSA Completio



Trivia Answer

Delaware & Hudson (D&H) Building was the original name of the SUNY System Administration Building, now referred to as the H. Carl McCall SUNY Building since 2020.

Keep up with SUNY and the Office of Government Relations

- Check out SUNY's legislative memos on our website [here](#).
- Join the SUNY team! Look for careers at SUNY [here](#).

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