



SUNY Office of Government Relations Newsletter

Dear Friend,

Welcome to the May edition of the SUNY Office of Government Relations newsletter! Here is what we have been up to!

- **Thank you to our SUNY champions for a fourth consecutive historic budget**

The SFY 2026-27 enacted budget delivered major wins for SUNY, marking four consecutive years of historic support for the SUNY System. The SFY 2026-27 enacted budget includes \$54 million in increased operating aid for state-operated campuses; \$12 million in increased operating aid for community colleges; expanding the landmark SUNY Reconnect initiative; doubling the Empire State Service Corps; expanding ASAP and ACE to reach 10,000 students in SUNY's nation-leading college retention and completion program; investing \$7.4 million in Career Connected internships; \$13.3 million for EOP; \$250,000 to expand Higher Education in Prison; and over \$1.2 billion in capital investments for critical maintenance, research facilities, thermal energy networks, and more.

- **SUNY took the stage on AI at the NYS AAPI Summit**

In recognition of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, SUNY partnered with Assemblymember Nily Rozic for a panel at the New York State AAPI Summit: AI for All. The conversation centered on who gets to shape the future of artificial intelligence — and how SUNY is a leader in the responsible development of AI for the public good.

- **Campus VPRs met with federal research agencies in DC**

Senior SUNY leadership joined Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Provost, and President of the Research Foundation Ram Ramasubramanian and Senior Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovation & Economic Development Shadi Sandvik for meetings with the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency — discussing funding

opportunities, energy storage innovation, AI-driven research competitiveness, and advanced research collaboration.

It has been a busy and rewarding month, and none of it would have been possible without the strength of our partnerships. We extend our deepest thanks to Governor Kathy Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, Higher Education Committee Chairs Senator Toby Ann Stavisky and Assemblymember Alicia Hyndman, and all of our SUNY champions in the State Legislature, as well as everyone across SUNY whose hard work and dedication made these budget achievements possible. We look forward to continuing this important work together!

Sincerely,

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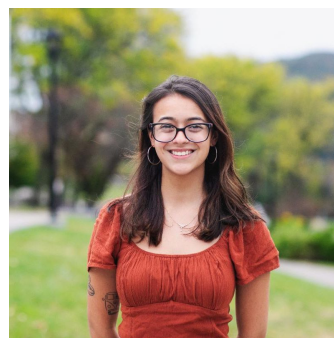
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🧠 Trivia 🧠

Which SUNY institution discovered the organism that causes Lyme disease?

Stony Brook University

Upstate Medical University

University at Albany

Binghamton University

LOOKING BACK: MONTHLY RECAP

SUNY News Highlights

- **SUNY Poly** and **SUNY College of Optometry** announce new partnership to expand student pathways and experiential learning opportunities. [Read more](#)
- SUNY Chancellor King announces second class of awardees of **Chancellor's Horizon Award** for faculty research and scholarship. [Read more](#)
- SUNY launches **neurodiversity training** for student leaders and staff. [Read more](#)
- **State University of New York at Buffalo** to offer the world's first doctorate in applied ontology. [Read more](#)
- SUNY Chancellor King announces **partnership with City Year** to provide academic credit for prior learning through service. [Read more](#)
- SUNY Chancellor King announced partnership to **expand pathways to healthcare careers** for military service members. [Read more](#)
- SUNY Chancellor King launches interactive **Mental Health Resource Finder** as part of Mental Health Awareness Month. [Read more](#)

- SUNY Chancellor King continues SUNY Reconnect Tour with a visit to **Sullivan County Community College**. [Read more](#)
- SUNY Chancellor King continues SUNY Reconnect Tour with a visit to **Orange County Community College**. [Read more](#)
- SUNY Chancellor King visits **SUNY Genesee Community College** as part of the SUNY Reconnect Tour. [Read more](#)
- Governor Hochul announces **Excelsior Scholarship** application open for 2026-27 academic year. [Read more](#)

SUNY Research Spotlight

Across the SUNY System, our campuses conduct a vast amount of groundbreaking research, producing innovations and insights with far-reaching benefits not only for New Yorkers, but for people across the world. Check out the [Research Connect Portal](#) to learn more about specific projects! Here are a few recent highlights:

- **State University of New York at Buffalo** researchers find factors that encourage participation in health research. [Read more](#)
- A **SUNY Canton** Civil and Environmental Engineering Technology team has earned national recognition at the American Concrete Institute's (ACI) Fiber-Reinforced Polymer (FRP) Composite Competition. [Read more](#)
- PhD graduate from the **State University of New York at Binghamton** breaks new ground in biobattery, papertronics research. [Read more](#)
- **SUNY ESF** research efforts showing promise toward restoring American chestnut trees. [Read more](#)
- **SUNY Potsdam** research on how drones are uncovering early traces of Black settlements in the Adirondacks. [Read more](#)
- **State University of New York at Albany** students launch weather balloons in Puerto Rico. [Read more](#)
- **SUNY Geneseo** students study coral reefs in the Bahamas. [Read more](#)
- A national team of cancer researchers led by researchers from the **State University of New York at Stony Brook** investigated the role of Keratin 17 in the most common form of pancreatic cancer. [Read more](#)

Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Enacted State Budget Highlights

Thank you to Governor Kathy Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, Higher Education Committee Chairs Senator Toby Ann Stavisky and Assemblymember Alicia Hyndman, and all of our SUNY champions in the State Legislature for their investment and continued commitment to SUNY and public higher education.

The SFY 2026-27 enacted state budget included:

- Maintain the 100% community college funding floor
- \$54 million increase in operating aid for state-operated campuses

- \$13.3 million increase for EOP
- \$12.5 million increase for SUNY Reconnect and expands it to public higher education institutions that offer associate's degrees, as well as makes it easier for adult learners to return to college to pursue nursing if they already have a prior degree
- \$12 million in additional operating aid for community colleges, including \$8 million targeted to increase slots in high-demand fields
- \$8 million to expand ASAP and ACE
- \$7.4 million for NY Career Connect internships
- \$2.8 million to expand the Empire State Service Corps
- \$600,000 to support emergency aid for students
- \$250,000 to expand Higher Education in Prison programs

Capital Funding

- \$795 million for critical maintenance
- \$150 million for thermal energy networks at public and state-owned buildings
- \$150 million in hospital critical maintenance
- \$128.1 million for community college capital local match
- \$100 million for research capital

DC Research Visit

On May 5, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Provost, and President of the Research Foundation Ram Ramasubramanian and Senior Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovation & Economic Development Shadi Sandvik, together with senior leadership from the State University of New York at Albany, the State University of New York at Binghamton, the State University of New York at Buffalo, the State University of New York at Stony Brook, SUNY Downstate Medical University, and the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, joined Whitney in Washington for a productive day of meetings with federal research agencies.

The group met with Dr. Rebecca Keiser, Acting Chief of Staff and Head of Research Security at the National Science Foundation (NSF), to discuss upcoming NSF funding opportunities and additional avenues for partnership between NSF and SUNY. They also met with Joda Thongnopnua, Special Advisor to the NSF TIP Assistant Director and Deputy Assistant Director, where discussions highlighted the success of Binghamton University's NSF Engine focused on energy storage innovation.

In addition, the group met with Dr. Bindu Nair, Associate Director in the Office of Basic Energy Sciences at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). Conversations centered on DOE's Genesis Mission, which seeks to harness artificial intelligence to strengthen American research competitiveness.

The day concluded with a meeting with Dr. Whitney Mason, Director of the Microsystems Technology Office at the Defense Advanced Research Projects

Agency (DARPA), where the group discussed the evolving landscape of advanced research and opportunities for future collaboration and partnership.



New York State AAPI Summit

On May 8, Will, Maria, Aria, Chelsea, and Julia attended the New York State AAPI Summit: AI for All hosted by the New York State Assembly and Senate's Asian Pacific American Task Force. SUNY hosted a panel titled "AI for the Public Good: How SUNY is Leading the Way." Moderated by Assemblymember Nily Rozic, the panel featured leading AI experts across SUNY including Dr. Hany Elgala from UAlbany, Dr. Atri Rudra from UB, Dr. Lav Varshney from Stony Brook University, Dr. Jeremy Blackburn from Binghamton University, and Dr. Dilip Nath from SUNY Downstate. Panelists discussed how the SUNY System is leveraging its capabilities to be a leader in AI research and preparing students for the workforce through intentional interdisciplinary education in AI. Thank you to Assemblymember Nily Rozic for moderating and sponsoring an engaging conversation and APA Task Force Chair Assemblymember Grace Lee, and APA Executive Director Liya Thachil, for hosting us!





EOP Ambassador Honored by NYS Senate



On May 7, EOP Ambassador Chriss-Ann Pryce was honored on the New York State Senate floor by Senator Rob Rolison. Chriss-Ann is a matriculated student at the State University of New York at Albany studying human biology. She aspires to become a physician, pursuing work and research in healthcare advocacy as well as health policy. Through her role as an Ambassador, she has traveled across New York State speaking with students, parents, counselors, legislators, and educational leaders about the impact of EOP, the importance of educational access, and bridging the gap to higher education for underserved communities. This year, she also joined the Office of Government Relations for EOP advocacy day and Caucus Weekend. **Watch the full video [here](#)**

Cornell Industrial and Labor Relations Buffalo Event



On May 7, Chancellor King and Will attended the “Education in Action: Experiential Pathways for Today’s Careers” panel in Buffalo to highlight the High Roads Fellowship and the importance of workforce development and experiential opportunities for students. The panel demonstrated the symbiotic relationship between SUNY Buffalo State University and Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR), as well as their commitment to providing meaningful internship experiences for their students. Cornell University ILR Buffalo Co-Lab Director Cathy Creighton moderated the panel of fellows, which included remarks from Chancellor King and Cornell ILR Dean Alex Colvin. We were thrilled to be joined by City of Buffalo Mayor Sean Ryan, Assemblymember Jon Rivera, and Senator Jeremy Zellner.

SUNY Erie Community College Campus Visit

On May 7, Will joined Chancellor King, SUNY Trustee Eunice Lewin, SUNY Erie President Adiam Tsegai, City of Buffalo Mayor Sean Ryan, and the Erie County Executive's Chief of Staff James Blackwell at SUNY Erie Community College's City Campus for a tour of their facilities including their Main Post Building, Flickinger Athletic Center, and 45 Oak Facility.



SUNY Fireside Chat

On May 19, Will participated in a fireside chat with Chancellor King, SUNY Chief Financial Officer Josh Sager, and Senior Vice Chancellor for Capital Facilities and General Manager of the SUNY Construction Fund Bob Haelen.

The conversation focused on how the trio works collectively to advance and advocate for SUNY budget priorities and to ensure the enacted state budget delivers as much as possible for students, faculty, staff, and facilities!



🧠 Trivia Answer 🧠

May was National Lyme Disease Awareness month! In the early 1980s, Stony Brook University researcher Dr. Jorge Benach and his colleague Willy Burgdorfer made the landmark discovery of the organism that causes Lyme disease. The bacteria, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, was named in Burgdorfer's honor.

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