

Public Higher Education Advocates for the New Deal for CUNY

Dear Governor Hochul,

Enclosed are 6,000 letters from CUNY community supporters, alumni, students and employees. They know the positive impact CUNY has on our communities and on the state budget itself. They each appreciate the commitment to public higher education that you expressed in your State of the State and urge you to do all you can to invest in a New Deal for CUNY.

You said last week at the NYSUT conference that it is time for educators to get the respect they deserve and that the era of disinvestment is over. We agree! You can help make that happen with a \$500 million increase in funding for CUNY, part of an overall statewide investment of \$1.1 billion in public higher education *this year*.

Please, give CUNY the investment it deserves in the final New York State budget.

Thank you,



James Davis, President
Professional Staff Congress-CUNY



Cory Provost, Chair
University Student Senate



Remysell Salas, Director
CUNY Rising Alliance



Megan Ahearn, Program Director
NYPIRG

PS: In addition to the letters, we've included a ND4C t-shirt for you with a slogan we think you'll appreciate: Everyone loves somebody at CUNY!

We need \$500 million toward the New Deal for CUNY!

As a supporter of CUNY, I urge you to pass a final state budget that increases CUNY funding by \$500 million to take a huge step toward making the New Deal for CUNY (A5843/S4461) a reality.

CUNY has endured years of racialized austerity and underfunding from the state. Since the Great Recession of 2008, per-student state funding for CUNY senior colleges has decreased 18%, leading to tuition hikes, reduced services, over reliance on underpaid adjunct instructors and shortages of full-time faculty and staff. Library, computer lab and writing center hours and staff have been reduced and class sizes have increased in the years since 2008. Tuition has increased 73% at the senior colleges and 71% at the community colleges over the same period. And students have substantially less access to full-time faculty than their counterparts at SUNY colleges where the student bodies are predominantly white.

The Governor has committed to a \$1.5 billion, five-year program of reinvestment for CUNY and SUNY. The Legislature has rightly recognized the need to accelerate the Governor's plan and is pushing to make a transformative investment of an additional \$500 million in CUNY in this year's budget.

CUNY needs \$500 million to hire more full-time faculty, advisors and mental health counselors, to rebuild academic departments and student services and stabilize community college budgets, among many other programmatic issues that have persisted for too long.

The New Deal for CUNY would make CUNY tuition-free again, set minimum faculty- and staff-to-student ratios, raise pay for adjuncts and fix CUNY's crumbling buildings and facilities. CUNY needs every dollar of the investments included in the Senate and Assembly one-house budget for these New Deal for CUNY priorities. I urge you to include them all in the final budget.

CUNY also desperately needs a 5-year capital plan with enhanced funding.

CUNY was free for generations, when the students were primarily white. But tuition was imposed soon after the student body became majority minority. Today, the University serves a half million students, most of them Black and brown New Yorkers from underserved low-income and immigrant communities. And CUNY is vastly underfunded.

You have an opportunity to invest in the people of New York and reverse years of racialized austerity in this year's State budget. We need the new Deal for CUNY, and an increase of \$500 million for CUNY is exactly what we need to jumpstart it!