



The Student Assembly of the State University of New York

SUNY Student Assembly Fee Proposal

Proposal for a SUNY Student Assembly Fee

Recommendation to create a \$0.50 per semester per student SUNY
Student Assembly Fee

April 7, 2019

Endorsed by the 2019 SUNYSA Spring Conference General Assembly

Endorsed by the 2019 Ad-Hoc Fee Committee

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SUNY Student Assembly Fee Proposal

The Student Assembly of the State University of New York recommends to the SUNY Board of Trustees the authorization of a \$0.50 per semester, per student, student governance fee to provide sustainable funding to the Student Assembly.

Proposal Rationale

It being necessary to promote the student voice in shared governance, to enhance the impact of student advocacy, to connect and offer resources to the students and student government associations of the State University of New York, and to maintain and strengthen the organizational capacity of the Student Assembly, we hereby call for the creation of a student governance fee to fund the Student Assembly of the State University of New York.

Ensuring that the 1.4 million students of the State University of New York are adequately represented in system-level decision-making is core to the mission of the Student Assembly. Recent investments into the Student Assembly's operational budget have strengthened its ability to meaningfully contribute to such decision-making. It has allowed for greater student representation on University-wide committees, allowed for more students to meet and interact with the Chancellor and senior system leadership, and has availed the Student Assembly of greater talent and resources with which to review proposed SUNY policy and procedures. It is essential that funding be maintained, as not to risk losing the powerful voice students have achieved in system-level decision-making.

Furthermore, increased investment in the Student Assembly has allowed for a greater student impact on the development of higher education policy both in the State of New York and nationally. Student Assembly advocacy for greater investment in public higher education; in support of vital financial aid programs; in opposition to harmful federal policy changes on Title IX, affirmative action, and DACA; and to increase student access to voting, support services, counseling, and academic advisement; offer a critical perspective to legislators and policy-makers that would otherwise be missing from key conversations. Without adequate financial resources to continue to support advocacy efforts the Student Assembly will not be able to maintain its legislative presence, nor would it be able to manage the policy portfolio of which it has built.

Another key aspect of the Student Assembly's mission is connecting student leaders from across the SUNY System's sixty-four distinct campuses. The network of student leaders that the Student Assembly fosters is not only beneficial to participants in Student Assembly programming, but to the system overall. No event brings as many SUNY students from as many campuses together as do the Student Assembly's biannual conferences. No event brings together as many student governance leaders as do the Student Assembly's presidential summits. No other outlet exists for the discussion of key areas of policy among students like the Student Assembly's committees. None of this would be possible without ample financial support. Without such support, Student Assembly programming and networking opportunities would be limited to the campuses that could afford to participate, lessening the representative nature of the organization.

Finally, maintaining and strengthening the organizational capacity of the Student Assembly is key to maximizing the potential impact of the organization's work. Increased funding has allowed for Executive Committee officers to visit and interact with more students on more campuses, for investment in software and programs that allow for students to better engage in advocacy efforts, and for the recruitment of new student talent and a more dynamic leadership team. Only through strengthened organizational capacity can the Student Assembly continue to affect positive change on key issues and enhance the student experience within the system.

For these reasons, guaranteeing the funding that the Student Assembly needs to thrive and meet its mission is of the utmost importance. Therefore, it is appropriate to seek out new, more sustainable sources of funding for the organization. After careful consideration of the structure of partner organizations across the country, with an eye towards fiscal sustainability, and with the knowledge that proper financial controls are necessary to guarantee organizational accountability, this committee has reached the conclusion that the imposition of a \$0.50 per student, per semester, student governance fee would be the wisest funding model to support. A fee imposed on students, by students, to promote the student interest, would ensure that competing interests do not limit the scope of Student Assembly activity or advocacy. Furthermore, removing Student Assembly funding from the political process of the New York State budget would offer financial predictability and allow for greater long-term financial planning. A \$1.00 student fee is enough to generate adequate revenue to support a strengthened Student Assembly, without becoming a financial burden on students. It is the only path forward that ensures that the Student Assembly continues to represent all students, and that gives all students a stake in the success of the organization.

In order for the Student Assembly to operate at the scale of comparable system-wide student governance organizations, it must consider the funding mechanisms employed by such partners across the nations. Of the various system-wide governance bodies, it is clear that the organizations with the greatest capacity have similar funding models. Each utilizes the revenue generated by a \$0.50 to \$2.00 per semester fee charged to each student in their respective systems. Such organizations include the City University of New York University Student Senate, the California State Student Association, and the University of California Student Association. Their ability to maintain steady funding through a student fee, and the resulting increased revenue, has allowed these student governance bodies the ability to offer greater services and more dynamic advocacy. Uses of increased revenue at other system-wide governance organizations include funding student scholarships and athletics, hiring full time operations and legislative staff, and offering programming to students across their systems with great frequency. In order to grow to the capacity enjoyed by many of our partners, the Student Assembly must secure a similar model of funding.

With an abiding desire to see the Student Assembly meet its full potential, and with the conviction that all necessary research has been conducted, this committee hereby endorses the creation of a \$0.50 per academic semester student governance fee to fund the Student Assembly.

Organization Description and Fee Exploration History

Established by Article XVII of the SUNY Board of Trustees Policies, the SUNY Student Assembly is the official organization by which students across the State University of New York participate in University-wide governance. The purpose of the Assembly is to provide a forum for consultation and the exchange of information between students and external stakeholders across New York State. The organization serves as the representative voice for the 1.4 million students across the SUNY system.

For many years, the Student Assembly has been exploring ways to bring the organization to scale. Currently, SUNY SA is funded through New York State's appropriations to the State University of New York. In the state operations appropriation bill, the Student Assembly is funded at \$57,100 within the total appropriation to SUNY's University Life, with an additional \$7,000 Student Leadership Account with the SUNY RF. After an internal two-percent cut within SUNY system administration, the organization's total budget is \$62,958.

This funding structure has been deliberated and debated on for more than a decade. In 2002, the Student Assembly passed a resolution at its Fall Conference calling for the establishment of a University wide Student Governance Fee at \$0.25 per semester (see Appendix A). This effort was unsuccessful. In 2018, the SUNY Student Assembly Executive Committee passed a resolution calling on SUNY SA President Marc J. Cohen to form an ad-hoc committee to consider the implementation of a SUNY Student Assembly fee. This committee, consisted of SGA Presidents and other student leaders, presented their final report on March 15th, 2018 (see Appendix B), in which they listed the pros and cons of each alternative revenue option. Concurrently with this fee committee, the Student Assembly approved their five-year strategic plan (see Appendix C). Through months of stakeholder engagement, this plan outlined four strategic priorities: (1) strengthening the student assembly network; (2) continuously improving advocacy activities and impact; (3) developing student leaders; and (4) building organizational capacity.

In the Spring of 2018, Chancellor Kristina Johnson and Senior Vice Chancellor Eileen McLoughlin granted the SUNY Student Assembly a one-time cash investment of \$157,500 to be divided between FY18 and FY19. This increase gave the Student Assembly resources to invest into the expansion of its organizational activities, student advocacy and civic engagement, and student leader compensation.

Despite the increase being monumental for the Student Assembly, the funds will expire at the end of FY19. Knowing this, President Michael Braun formed a task force in August of 2018 to further research a system-wide student governance fee. This report (see Appendix D) outlined the funding models and budgets of comparable system-wide organizations, analyzed potential revenue, recommended budget initiatives with more funding, and indicated the process necessary to implement such a fee. Fee task force Chair Chester Bennett presented their findings at the 2018 Student Assembly Fall Conference.

In the Spring semester of 2019, President Michael Braun launched another ad-hoc committee comprised of student government Presidents from across the SUNY system to make a recommendation to the General Assembly whether the Student Assembly should pursue a \$0.50 per semester fee (see Appendix E). This committee unanimously approved a resolution endorsing the implementation of a Student Assembly fee (see Appendix F).

SUNY Student Assembly Budget

	2017-18		2018-19	
<u>Revenues:</u>				
Student Assembly Appropriation	\$55,958		Student Assembly State Appropriation	\$55,958
Student Leadership Account	\$7,000		Student Leadership Account	\$7,000
			One-Time Lump Sum Infusion	\$78,750
Total Operating Budget	\$62,958		Total Operating Budget	\$141,708
<u>Expenses:</u>				
Stipends	\$15,000		Stipends	\$48,000
Executive Committee Meetings	\$22,500		Executive Committee Meetings	\$25,000
Fall & Spring Conference	\$18,000		Fall & Spring Conference	\$32,500
Materials	\$400		Marketing & Materials	\$4,200
Transitional Conference	\$7,000		Transitional Conference	\$9,000
			Travel & Programming	\$14,500
			Software	\$8,500
			(Phone2Action, Ballot Ready)	
Total Expenses	\$62,900		Total Expenses	\$141,700

Impact of SUNY Student Assembly with Expanded Budget

As noted in the previous section, the Student Assembly received a one-time lump sum infusion of \$155,700 to be split between the 2018 and 2019 fiscal years. This expansion has brought the Student Assembly to new heights- increasing the engagement with students, developing new professional development opportunities, expanding partnerships, and building the organization as a true platform for student advocacy and grassroots mobilization.

Student Leader Engagement

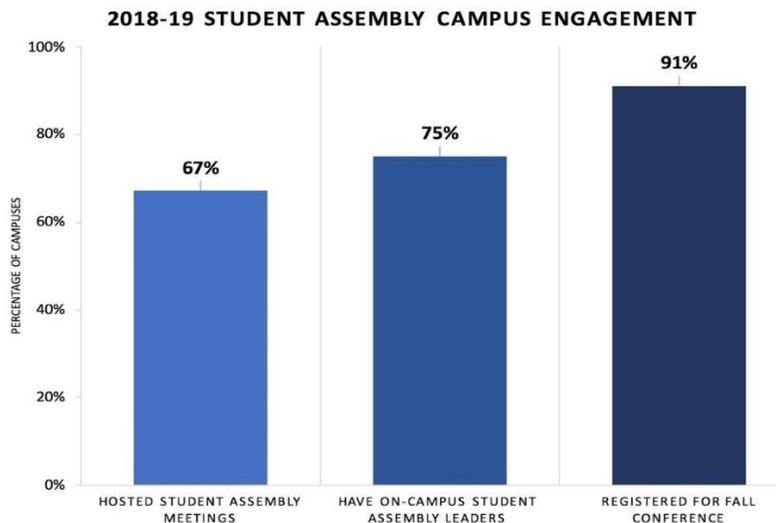
The ability of the Student Assembly to engage with students from throughout the 64 SUNY institutions sets the organization apart from other similar groups. Expanding that engagement has provided the opportunity for a large, diverse group of students to have challenging conversations that seek out innovative and inclusive solutions to hot topics in higher education.

An increase in travel funding yielded significantly improved results in its engagement efforts (see Figure 1). Enabled by proper resources, the Student Assembly was able to coordinate meetings with 27 campus student governments on their home campuses, host monthly Student Assembly Executive Committee meetings on eight campuses, and fund attendance at SUNY student affairs conferences on eight campuses within the 2018-19 academic year. Funding this travel increased the accessibility of the Student Assembly to students from campuses across NYS and has brought about a physical presence of the Student Assembly at 83% of SUNY campuses.

Engaging with students face-to-face on a regular basis provided increased opportunity for recruitment. Leaders of the Student Assembly successfully recruited a SUNY student to represent the Student Assembly at 48 of the 64 campuses, creating leadership roles for 80 students.

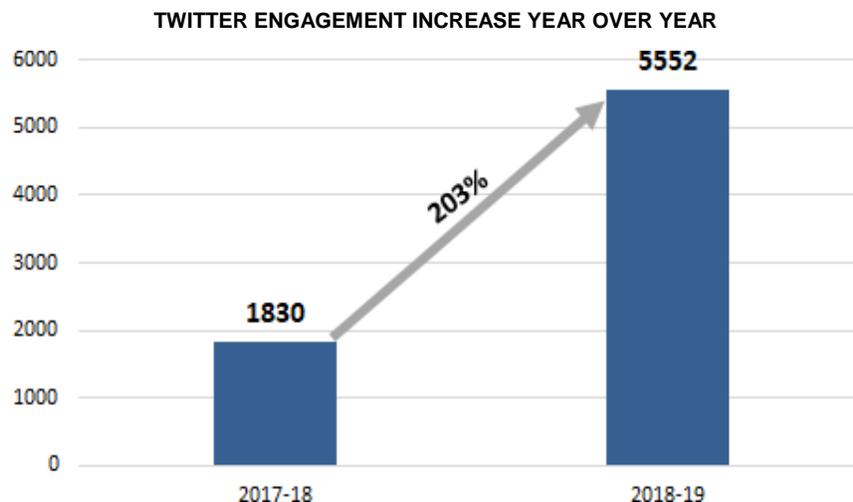
Expanding accessibility and engagement further, the Student Assembly invested in technology to livestream events and meetings across social media platforms, amassing an average of 434 views on each video. Increasing the online presence through digital engagement and marketing expanded relationships with campus student governments, the other pillars of shared governance in the SUNY System, and other higher education advocacy organizations. These strengthened relationships and the increased availability of information through these livestreams and the previously outlined travel increased student registration at the SUNY Student Assembly 2019 Fall Conference by 70.23% in comparison to the 2018 Fall Conference.

Figure 1: SUNY Student Assembly’s campus engagement through meetings, number of campus student leaders, and conference attendance by percentage



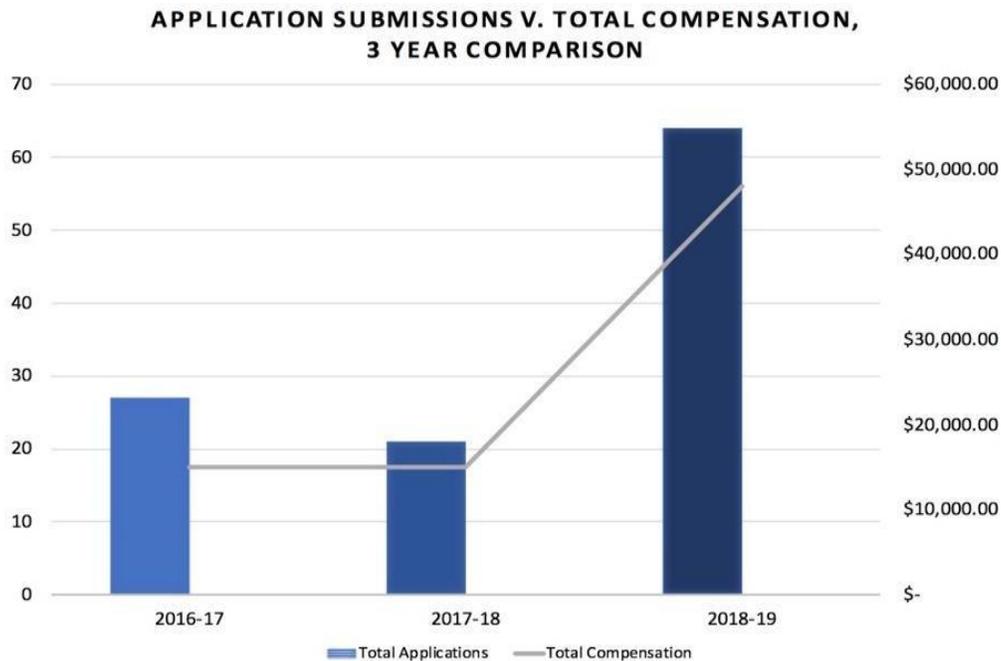
Additional revenues also afforded our organization the ability to hire an effective communications team that further bolstered our impact on social media. SUNY SA’s twitter account, which SUNY SA uses to connect with elected officials, influencers, campus student government associations, and students, has shown astronomical growth, with engagements, likes, and retweets up 203%, 361%, and 407% respectively from FY 2017-18 to FY 2018-19.

Figure 2: Change in twitter activity between 2017-18 & 2018-19, by percentage, as well as number of engagements



The increased budget has provided funding which allowed the Student Assembly to provide increased compensation to its hired staff (see Figure 3). The provision of this compensation has attracted a larger pool of talent, allowing the Student Assembly to choose from increasingly qualified, competent students to serve the organization and the students of the State University of New York. The increase in total compensation from \$15,000 in 2017-18 to \$48,000 in 2018-19 has yielded a 205% increase in submitted applications.

Figure 3: Submitted SUNY SA applications, by number compared to total compensation in the last three academic years



Professional Development Opportunities

Increased funding resulted in increased opportunities for more SUNY Students. The Student Assembly was able to send student leaders to over 50 conferences throughout the academic semester. These conferences included the Real College Conference at Temple University, Applied Learning Conference, Guided Pathways Institute, and many more. Through these conferences, student leaders had the opportunity to meet with legislators, SUNY staff, external stakeholders, and engage in projects for SUNY and the SUNY Board of Trustees. Furthermore, the Student Assembly was able to begin an Aspiring Leaders' Summit offering free registration to young student government leaders to attend the Student Assembly's Fall 2018 Conference. While at the conference, aspiring leaders separated from the business meeting to attend leadership development workshops, hear from experienced leaders, and discuss how they could utilize the skills they gained from the summit on their home campuses.

Partnership Expansion

The increased budget and staff have allowed us to further foster partnerships within New York State and beyond. The Student Assembly has been able to strengthen its presence in-state through partnerships with NYSUT, NYPIRG, CUNY USS, and other higher education focused organizations, who we have joined at dozens of events and press conferences that have allowed us to expand the reach of our advocacy. At the federal level, we joined system-wide student government leaders in advocacy at the nation's capital, forming the groundwork for a

national alliance, which collectively represents more than seven million students. This national alliance will improve the legitimacy of the Student Assembly in federal advocacy pursuits and bolster SUNY's voice nationally.

As partnerships with other organizations expanded, so did the impact of team-led events. The Student Assembly played an increased role in the coalition planning of Higher Education Action Day and was primarily responsible for a nearly 100% increase in student registrants, setting a record with more than 1,400 students and faculty registered to attend. Most of this increase was due to the new role the Student Assembly could play with increased funding enabling the organization to fund transportation for students all across the state.

Student Advocacy and Grassroots Mobilization

In December of 2018, the Student Assembly launched its first ever in-district student advocacy week. Students took meetings with state legislators to discuss the issues that affect students directly and the importance of passing critical higher education legislation. In one week, the Student Assembly successfully organized and facilitated 16 meetings involving 45 students representing 15 campuses. In addition to this incredibly impactful week of advocacy, students and members of the Student Assembly's Executive Committee had 30 additional meetings with lawmakers. Our advocacy reached districts which represent nearly 175,000 SUNY students in total.

The ability to bring students into legislative meetings was not only an incredible opportunity for student leaders but was also incredibly impactful. At the SUNY SA 2018 Fall Conference, SUNY students passed the most comprehensive advocacy agenda in the history of the organization (see Appendix H). As you will see in this advocacy agenda, our advocacy included increasing investment into SUNYs operating appropriations to fund the UUP contract, a new funding model which institutes a funding floor for SUNYs Community Colleges, the restoration of funding for SUNYs Telecounseling Network, expansion of SUNYs opportunity programs, and additional capital funding for new projects.

These advocacy efforts yielded monumental results for SUNY and its students. First, the NYS Senate and Assembly took powerful steps through their one-house bills in recognizing the systemic underfunding created by the "TAP Gap." Also, both the Senate and Assembly included language that would restore the mental health telecounseling program. Furthermore, the Assembly one-house included a funding floor for Community Colleges, significant increases in opportunity programs, and additional support for capital programs. The NYS Senate proposed an expansion to eligibility for the Tuition Assistance Program.

The Student Assembly's civic engagement did not stop there. With the additional funds provided this year, SUNY SA was successful in coordinating the first-ever SUNY Votes campaign, which registered more than 12,000 students across the system. Through a partnership with BallotReady, SUNY SA was able to offer voter information and engagement tools to students ahead of the 2018 midterm elections. This service benefited students across the system, receiving nearly 10,000 engagements.

SUNY SA also utilized funds to make long-term investments in the future of our advocacy capacity. To do so, SUNY SA partnered with Phone2Action, a software for public affairs and grassroots advocacy which will allow students to connect to the organization's advocacy regardless of where they are located. This service has a 70% success rate for advocacy campaigns and will give SUNY SA the capacity to harness the voices of students remotely.

National System-wide Student Government Budget Comparison

The Student Assembly has done significant research on the structure and finances of other system-wide student government organizations across the nation. Included below are the budgets of three of the Student Assembly's closest partners- CUNY University Student Senate (USS), California State Student Association (CSSA), and the University of California Student Association (UCSA). Each of these organizations collect a student governance fee (ranging from \$1.35 to \$2 per student per semester) that funds their operations.

CUNY USS assesses a \$1.45 fee per student that is allocated into three separate accounts. The largest line is the USS operating budget and is made up of \$1.01 of the \$1.45 fee. The other two-line items are CUNY Athletics and USS Scholarships that make up \$0.21 and \$0.24 of the total respectively. After administrative costs the total USS Budget is \$766,636.90.

CUNY USS (2017)

CUNY Athletics	\$103,248.21
Scholarships	\$115,753.35
Personnel	\$160,539.00
Operational Expenses	\$334,981.02
Conference & Seminar Expense	\$85,000.00
Stipends for 10 Officers	\$63,000.00
Standing Committees	\$59,162.31
Cultural Activities & Special Events	\$49,018.71
Travel- General	\$19,000.00
Administrative Fees	\$53,781.13
Total Budget	\$768,301.71

CSSA assesses a \$2.00 Student Involvement and Representation Fee (SIRF) per semester that results in \$1,641,828.92 or 95% of their total operating budget. CSSA also generates revenue from conferences, Board Orientation, and investments which amounts to \$1,735,828.92.

Operations	\$160,955.28
Total Compensation	\$993,152.62
Reserve	\$82,091.45
Internal Programs	\$193,004.58
Advocacy & Gov. Affairs	\$154,175.00
University Affairs	\$104,950.00
Communications & PR	\$47,500.00
Total Budget	\$1,735,828.92

USCA assesses a pre-determined fee per student every quarter or semester that varies based on each campus. There is an assumption that each of the campuses pay at least \$1.30 per student as campus dues which amounts to \$523,929. USCA also generates income through a few other sources- generating most of its additional revenue through conferences- which amounts to a total budget of \$701,079.

USCA (2018)

Board Expenses	\$35,325.00
Campaigns & Programs	\$24,000.00
Conferences	\$153,000.00
Government Relations	\$45,443.00
Statewide Organizing	\$29,609.00
Operations & Development	\$51,714.00
University Affairs	\$38,462.00
Personnel	\$323,526.00
Total Budget	\$732,840.00

Optional Budget with Expansion Breakdown

This budget breakdown illustrates one way that revenues could be allocated should a student governance fee be authorized. The final budget would be created and proposed by the incoming SUNY Student Assembly Executive Board and approved by the incoming Executive Committee with line items determined based on set priorities for the year. Should this fee be issued, there would be a significant period of time where students could communicate with their Representatives to suggest modifications to the budget to better reflect the values of students across the system.

Summary		
Line Item	Description	Proposed Budget
	SUNY SA Scholarships	\$50,000.00
	SUNY SA Personnel	\$68,500.00
	SUNY SA Operation	\$285,000.00
	Total SUNY SA Budget	\$403,500.00
Scholarships		
100	Scholarship A	\$10,000.00
101	Scholarship B	\$10,000.00
102	Scholarship C	\$10,000.00
103	Scholarship D	\$20,000.00
	Scholarships Sub-Total	\$50,000.00
Personnel		
Line Item	Description	Proposed Budget
200	SUNY SA Project Coordinator	\$50,000.00
201	F/B Expense Full Time @ 37%	\$18,500.00
	Personnel Sub-Total	\$68,500.00
Operational		
Line Item	Description	Proposed Budget
300	Executive Committee Meetings	\$30,000.00
301	Student Assembly Conferences	\$75,000.00
302	Transitional Conference	\$10,000.00
303	Materials & Supplies	\$5,000.00
304	Travel Budget- General	\$8,000.00
307	Stipends	\$48,000.00
308	SUNY SA Advocacy Training Conference	\$15,000.00
309	Black, Puerto Rican & Asian Legislative Caucus Conference	\$10,000.00
310	Somos el Futuro Conference	\$10,000.00
311	Higher Education Action Day	\$10,000.00
312	SGA Presidents' Summit	\$10,000.00
313	Federal Advocacy	\$10,000.00
314	SUNY Votes	\$7,000.00
315	Phone2Action	\$7,000.00
317	Marketing	\$10,000.00
318	Grant Programs	\$20,000.00
	Operation Sub-Total	\$285,000.00

Optional Budget with Expansion Narrative

SUNY SA Scholarships With an increase in revenues, SUNY SA is given the opportunity to give back to the SUNY students, addressing their increasing needs as the cost of higher education rises. Similar to other system-wide student government organizations, SUNY SA has set aside 12-15% of the yearly budget to providing scholarships to SUNY students through an open application process. Eligibility and other policies for the awarding of these scholarships would be determined by incoming administration but would likely involve the creation of a SUNY SA Scholarship Committee (upon approval of the Executive Committee) and guidelines set based on community involvement, financial need, leadership, and academic excellence.

100 Scholarship A For the awarding of ten scholarships valued at \$1,000.00 each

101 Scholarship B For the awarding of ten scholarships valued at \$1,000.00 each

102 Scholarship C For the awarding of ten scholarships valued at \$1,000.00 each

103 Scholarship D For the awarding of ten scholarships valued at \$2,000.00 each

200 SUNY SA Project Coordinator For the contracting of a full-time professional to direct the logistical planning of Executive Committee meetings, bi-annual conferences, and other special projects of the Student Assembly including but not limited to the President's Summit, Federal Advocacy Trip, and Higher Education Action Day. The SUNY SA Project Coordinator will be able to dedicate the necessary time to coordinate the level of work aroused by increased programming made possible through increased revenues. Each year the contract with this Coordinator would be renewed by the incoming SUNY SA President, whom the Project Coordinator would report to.

201 Fringe Benefits Expense Full Time @ 37% For the full-time benefits awarded to the SUNY SA Project Coordinator.

300 Executive Committee Meetings For the costs associated with the meetings of the SUNY SA Executive Committee including food, space rental, and travel. The increase in allocation towards this line will enable SUNY SA to pay for meetings in their entirety, relieving the financial burden on campus student government associations.

301 Student Assembly Conferences For the costs associated with the planning and execution of the SUNY SA bi-annual conferences. The increase in allocation towards this line will enable SUNY SA to cover the registration costs of one voting delegate per campus, increasing the representation of SUNY students and relieving the financial burden on campus student government associations.

302 Transitional Conference For the costs associated with the planning and execution of the SUNY SA Transitional Conference, which brings outgoing and incoming Executive Committee leadership together to set priorities for the year, including but not limited to travel and lodging expenses.

303 Materials & Supplies For the purchase of supplies for the SUNY SA office including folders, printing of materials, and audio-visual technology to increase the accessibility of Executive Committee meetings.

304 Travel Budget- General For the travel expenses incurred by the SUNY SA Executive Committee to attend conferences, coordinate campus visits, and meet with administrators/legislators.

307 Stipends Stipends are awarded to members of the Executive Committee for their service during a SUNY SA term on a yearly basis and distributed on a monthly basis to the members. Below is the 2018-19 model of stipend distributions:

Position	Yearly Stipend
President	\$ 8,000.00
Vice President	\$ 6,000.00
Treasurer	\$ 5,000.00
Secretary	\$ 4,000.00
Chief of Staff	\$ 4,000.00
Coordinator of Campus Engagement	\$ 2,000.00
Director of Government Relations	\$ 2,000.00
Manager of Special Projects	\$ 2,000.00
Director of Communications	\$ 1,000.00
Director of Sustainability	\$ 1,000.00
Director of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion	\$ 1,000.00
Director of Academic Affairs	\$ 1,000.00
Director of Campus Safety	\$ 1,000.00
Director of Development	\$ 1,000.00
Director of Rules	\$ 500.00
Representatives	\$ 8,000.00
Social Media Coordinator	\$ 500.00

308 SUNY SA Advocacy Training Conference For the costs associated with the planning and facilitating of a SUNY SA Advocacy Training Conference. SUNY SA would use this allocation to cover registration, travel, and lodging costs for SUNY SA Campus Liaisons. Other SUNY students interested would have the opportunity to attend at the cost of a registration fee.

309 Black, Puerto Rican & Asian Legislative Caucus For the travel and registration costs incurred by SUNY SA for the Black, Puerto Rican & Asian Legislative Caucus. With this allocation, SUNY SA could facilitate an open application process for any SUNY student interested in attending.

310 Somos el Futuro Conference For the travel and registration costs incurred by SUNY SA for the Somos el Futuro Conference. With this allocation, SUNY SA could facilitate an open application process for any SUNY student interested in attending.

311 Higher Education Action Day For the costs associated with the planning and facilitating of Higher Education Action Day including but not limited to bus and rental expenses to bring SUNY students to the Capitol Building in Albany.

312 SGA Presidents' Summit For the costs associated with the planning and facilitating of the SGA Presidents' Summit including but not limited to travel and lodging expenses for SGA Presidents.

313 Federal Advocacy For the costs associated with the planning and facilitating of an annual trip to Washington DC for federal advocacy including but not limited to travel and lodging expenses.

314 SUNY Votes For an investment into BallotReady, a software providing voter information and engagement tools to students ahead of elections.

315 Phone2Action For an investment into Phone2Action, a software for public affairs and grassroots advocacy which allows students to connect to the organization's advocacy from their phone, regardless of where they are located.

317 Marketing For the costs associated with increasing the profile and visibility of SUNY SA, both within and outside the State University of New York, including but not limited to social media advertisements and promotional materials.

318 Grant Programs For the funding of grants aligned with the set priorities of SUNY SA. This allocation would enable SUNY SA to facilitate an open application process for four grants of \$5,000 to be awarded to student groups (or faculty/staff that are sponsored by student groups) to engage in efforts that align with the set priorities of SUNY SA which may or may not include areas such as Sustainability, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Campus Safety and Student Affairs. Eligibility and other policies for the awarding of these grants would be determined by incoming administration but would likely involve the utilization of committees within SUNY SA to review applications and administer awards, the approval of the Treasurer for each award, and the monitoring of the efforts with regular communication between the awarded student group and SUNY SA.

Fee Implementation and Administration

The implementation and administration of a \$0.50 per semester student governance fee would be jointly overseen by the State University of New York and the Student Assembly. Assuming the Student Assembly Conference votes to endorse the creation of such a fee, the following process would need to be undertaken to see the fee's implementation.

- 1) The Student Assembly would need to agree to a financial custodianship arrangement with an authorized party. Both the State University of New York and the Research Foundation for the State University of New York have formally offered to serve as the Student Assembly's financial custodian.
- 2) The Student Assembly would revise its financial policies to meet the terms of the custodianship agreement with SUNY or the Research Foundation, and to guarantee proper internal and external controls over the disbursement of fee revenues.
- 3) The SUNY Board would have to formally approve the implementation of the fee at their June 2019 meeting. To implement the fee at the state-operated campuses, the Board would simply need to include the student governance fee in the regular fee schedule. For community colleges, a requirement would need to be written into the SUNY authorized budget guidelines to guarantee collection. A requirement would also be set that any action to increase the fee must originate from the Student Assembly Conference.
- 4) Campuses would collect the fee from students along with tuition and other fees and would send the revenue to SUNY via bank transfer. SUNY would then either hold the revenue or transfer it to another designated custodian.
- 5) The Student Assembly would then administer the fee, subject to internal financial policies and the external controls imposed by the financial custodian.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is SUNY SA and why should I care?

A: The SUNY Student Assembly is the only organization dedicated to advocating for the students of the SUNY system. We meet as a whole at our bi-annual conferences to elect officers, set an advocacy agenda, and provide workshops to student leaders across the state. Throughout the year, the Executive Committee visits *at least* one campus each month, supports programming on campuses, and meets with legislators to push for student initiatives.

Q. How would all students benefit from this fee?

A. There are many ways that all students will see a direct benefit from this fee. The investment into more opportunities for local, state, and federal advocacy can result in hundreds, thousands, and even millions of dollars in savings through effective advocacy. With SUNY SA able to cover more of the costs for our Executive Committee meetings and Conferences, campus student government associations will be relieved of that financial burden and enabled to invest more of their operating dollars into more programming and activities on campuses. With open programming and events, as well as open elections and cabinet applications, all students will have an opportunity to participate with and benefit from the Student Assembly directly. Lastly, SUNY SA will be able to offer scholarships, grants, and valuable professional development opportunities.

Q. How can the student assembly fee be changed or modified?

A. The administration of the fee will be governed by a SUNY Board of Trustees policy that will authorize the fee, with language to ensure the Student Assembly's General Assembly has the authority to make any changes to the level of the fee. In this regard, if the General Assembly wanted to pursue an increase or decrease, the voting delegates would have the authority to make that change, and the SUNY Board of Trustees will have the final approval.

Q: How is SUNY SA currently funded?

A: Our current funding is through a line item in the SUNY Executive budget, which currently stands at \$55,958. In addition, SUNY has agreed to a one-time only, two-year cash infusion of an additional \$155,700 total, with \$78,750 allocated for the 2018-19 year. With the addition of \$7,000 from the Student Leadership Account, SUNY SA's total 2018-19 budget came to \$141,708.

Q: How much funding would a \$0.50/student per semester fee raise?

A: Based on current enrolment estimates from SUNY, this fee would generate approximately \$400,000 in revenue for the SUNY Student Assembly.

Q: What could we do with this money that we wouldn't be able to do otherwise?

A: The ultimate budget would be created and proposed by the incoming SUNY Student Assembly Executive Board and approved by the incoming Executive Committee with line items determined based on set priorities for the year. Should this fee be issued, there would be a significant period of time where students could communicate with their Representatives to suggest modifications to the budget to better reflect the values of students across the system. Possibilities outlined in the Optional Budget with Expansion Breakdown include covering costs for voting delegates to attend our bi-annual conferences, expanding programming on

campuses, creating programs that provide financial assistance for students through scholarships and grants, and hiring a full-time Project Coordinator.

Q: Has this ever been done before?

A: Yes. Many other system-wide student government organizations, including the CUNY University Senate and the California State Student Association, are funded at least in part by a system-wide fee, while the levels and methods of implementation vary from system to system.

Q: How will the fee be collected and administered?

A: Campuses would collect the fee from students along with tuition and other fees and would send the revenue to SUNY via bank transfer. SUNY would then either hold the revenue or transfer it to another designated custodian.

Q: Who will pay the fee?

A: All part-time and full-time students of all SUNY institutions will pay the full fee value.



THE STATE UNIVERSITY of NEW YORK



Student Assembly

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*[http://www.suny.edu/
student/studentassembly](http://www.suny.edu/student/studentassembly)*

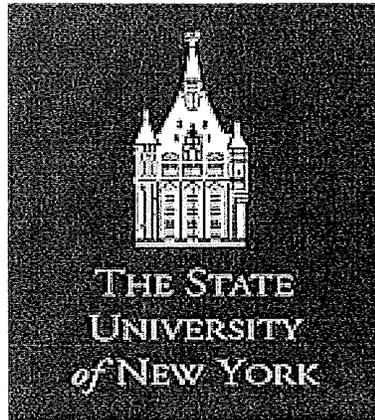
MEMORANDUM

To: Robert L. King, Chancellor, State University of New York
From: George H. Pape, Jr., President, State University of New York Student Assembly
CC: Richard P. Miller, Jr., Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer, State University of New York
John J. O'Connor, Vice Chancellor and Secretary of the University, State University of New York
Edward P. Engelbride, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Life, State University of New York
Date: October 29, 2002
Re: Student Governance Fee Resolution

I am writing to formally notify you that the State University of New York Student Assembly has passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a University wide *Student Governance Fee*. This resolution was passed at the SUNY Student Assembly's Fall 2002 Conference held on October 19, 2002.

Pending your continued support, I would request a resolution formally establishing this fee be presented to the Board of Trustees at the November meeting. I will of course be discussing this matter with Chairman Egan.

I have attached a copy of the resolution for your review.



Student Assembly

Resolution calling for a “Student Governance Fee”

- Where as:** SUNY System Administration has not increased funding for the SUNY Student Assembly in numerous years.
- Where as:** SUNY System Administration only gives the SUNY Student Assembly \$61,000 annually to support its functions.
- Where as:** SUNY System Administration fiscally supports the Faculty Council of Community Colleges and the University Faculty Senate, both of which are given less funds and both of which are additionally supported by their representative campuses.
- Where as:** The current allotted budget of \$61,000 can no longer sustain the needs of the SUNY Student Assembly and it severely limits the SUNY Student Assembly’s ability to represent the 400,000 plus students of SUNY.

Where as: Every SUNY student is a member of and can seek assistance and participation in the SUNY Student Assembly.

Where as: The SUNY Student Assembly is the only organization in the State of New York which is empowered by Article XVII of the Policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees to represent all of the students of SUNY.

Be it hereby

Resolved: The SUNY Student Assembly votes to establish a Student Governance Fee to commence at the beginning of the 2003 Spring Semester to be assessed to all the students at all the colleges of SUNY.

Resolved: The SUNY Student Assembly authorizes the amount of the Student Governance Fee to be initially set at \$.25 per SUNY student per semester.

Resolved: The SUNY Student Assembly fully authorizes the Chancellor of SUNY to recommend to the SUNY Board of Trustees a resolution calling for the creation of a SUNY wide Student Governance Fee to be collected by each of the 64 SUNY Campuses and remitted back to SUNY System Administration and placed into the SUNY Student Assembly's account under the following conditions:

- 1. The SUNY Student Assembly votes annually to determine whether the Students of SUNY continue to support such a fee, upon a vote in the negative, the fee would cease to be collected at the closure of the fiscal year in which the vote has taken place.**
- 2. The SUNY Student Assembly votes annually to determine the amount collected per student. Any change in amount will be effective at the start of the following fiscal year.**

Resolved: The SUNY Student Assembly highly recommends to the SUNY Board of Trustees to approve a resolution calling for the establishment of a University wide Student Governance fee; so long as the resolution reflects the conditions aforementioned in this resolution and the final resolution recommended to the SUNY Board of Trustees is deemed acceptable by the SUNY Student Assembly President.

Alternative Revenue Sources for the SUNY Student Assembly

New Fee – On each student’s bill they would see a new fee along the lines of “SUNY Student Assembly.” The fee would begin at 50 cents per student in the 2020-2021 year, increase to 75 cents the following year, and phase into \$1 per student per year for foreseeable future. The fee would be collected by each campus and then send to the Student Assembly.

Pros: This is a uniform way to collect additional revenue. The Student Assembly has proven over the last few years to be an active organization, even with such a small budget. This option would help expand the activity of the organization without substantially charging students and families. This option also ensures that we are being as transparent as possible such that students know exactly where their money is going.

Cons: The Student Assembly has a long track-record of opposing any new fees, big or small. By asking to implement our own fee, we could be tagged as self-interested and hypocritical. Additionally, in order to affect all students there would need to be a change to State Education Law as the Board of Trustees is only empowered to assess new fees for state operated campuses. Community Colleges are only required to pay if mandated by state law.

Partial Allocation from Existing College Fee – Each state operated campus has a “college fee.” Students at University Centers pay \$125 and students at all other state operated campus pay \$25. \$1 from each student’s fee would be taken out and allocated to the Student Assembly. Community colleges assess the fee based on local rule.

Pros: As this fee already exists on campuses, we would simply repurpose \$1 from each students fee to go to the Student Assembly. We aren’t asking students to pay more, and it would be difficult for campuses to argue an allocation of \$1 to student advocacy being harmful.

Cons: Universal implementation could prove complicated as community colleges follow a different set of rules than state operated campuses. Even changing state law would not suffice as each community college handles this broad-based fee in a slightly different way. We could also be accused of trying to repurpose funding meant to stay on campus to benefit students locally.

Partial Allocation of Student Activity Fee - Each of our campuses has an existing student activity fee which goes to enhancing the quality of life for students on campus. This option would provide for \$1 from each student’s student activity fee being collected to support the activity of SUNY SA. We would investigate the possibility of phasing this in starting at 50 cents, 75 cents, and then \$1.

Pros: Every campus collects the student activity fee which would make implementation less difficult logistically. Similarly to the college fee alternative, we would not be assessing a new fee eliminating the concern that students are being asked to pay more.

Cons: Student governments often rely on every dollar of the funding they've got leaving no room to send a portion elsewhere. Also similar to the college fee alternative, students may want every dollar of their fee to stay on campus rather than being sent to the Student Assembly.

Amplifying the Student Voice 2018-2023

SUNY Student Assembly Strategic Plan



The State University of New York
Student Assembly

Welcome Message from Student Assembly President Marc J. Cohen

SUNY student leaders and Student Assembly stakeholders,

I couldn't be more excited to present the Student Assembly Strategic Plan for the coming years, which promises to serve as an unprecedented resource for our future leadership, stakeholders, and partners. It has been an honor to serve as the Student Assembly President for two years, and it is comforting to know that the student leaders throughout the system that were consulted to develop this document are full of incredible ideas on how to improve the Student Assembly in the future.

One of the greatest challenges that we face in working to make student organizations successful is the turnover of leadership as we move on, leading to a lack of continuity in our initiatives. This year, our leadership team wanted to take ambitious action to help counteract this barrier to success. We facilitated a year-long conversation between current and past Student Assembly leadership, campus SGA officials from throughout the system, and key partners to define our top priorities and values and apply them to what the best consensus approaches should be in the coming years. The result is this document: a comprehensive resource for anyone interested in the Student Assembly to learn what we do, how we do it, and how we plan to take our successes to the next level in the coming years.

This plan was written collectively by SUNY student leaders with an eye toward the future and an understanding that we would have benefitted from a resource such as this when we began our path in student leadership. All too often with student organizations, by the time we start to settle into a leadership position and develop a clarity of vision, it is time to elect next year's team. Our goal in developing this strategic plan is to give each successive leadership group a jumpstart in moving the Student Assembly forward, provide a resource to increase engagement among campus student governments throughout SUNY, and show everyone that the SUNY Students are serious about maximizing the impact of our voices.

Being in this position has been the experience of a lifetime and I am beyond proud of the work we have done to advance SUNY student interests in the last two years. I hope that future SUNY student leaders enjoy their time as much as I have, but continue to build the Student Assembly and exceed all past accomplishments. And, I hope that our Strategic Plan makes doing so a little bit easier.

Sincerely,

Marc J. Cohen

SUNY Student Assembly President, 2016-18



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About the Strategic Plan

During the 2017-18 academic year, SUNY student leaders have been engaged in a conversation about how the Student Assembly can fulfill its highest potential in the coming years. After over 100 students shared their thoughts, the Student Assembly's key partners consulted, and research was conducted on higher education trends and organizational best practices, the best ideas have been compiled and presented in this document to serve as a resource for Student Assembly leadership and all of our stakeholders.

This plan presents a broad vision of improvement for the Student Assembly and identifies core strategies and key initiatives that are likely to be applicable and supported by SUNY students for at least five years. While the Student Assembly is proud of the work it has done historically, and especially in recent years, it also recognizes that aspiring to be better and planning how to do so is a critical activity for a serious organization.

Future Student Assembly leadership teams should see this document as a resource and

guide, a valuable compilation of what their predecessors viewed as top priorities and how to accomplish them. Campus Student Government leaders can use this document to learn more about the Student Assembly, become more engaged in its efforts, and to apply any relevant strategies to their own activities. The Student Assembly's partners, including SUNY and New York State officials, can use this document as a resource to inform themselves about what the Student Assembly stands for and aspires to be so that stronger relationships can be formed in the future.

The overarching goal of formulating this document is to engage leaders from throughout the system in long-term strategic thinking, then to present successive groups with a comprehensive resource that can help jump-start their initiatives. The top takeaway from the experience of creating this plan was the incredible optimism among student leaders for the future of the Student Assembly, which we hope all readers feel as they read on.

Stakeholder engagement in the Strategic Planning Process:

- Over 30 interviews conducted with members of the 2017-18 Executive Committee about organizational priorities, strengths, and weaknesses
- Focus group conducted at the Fall SUNY SGA Presidents Summit
- Focus group conducted at the Fall SUNY SA Conference
- Monthly reports given to the Executive Committee with additional opportunities for input and feedback.
- Multiple drafts presented to Executive Committee and SGA Presidents and feedback incorporated into final draft.

Executive Summary

Over the last half-century, students have consistently been at the forefront of social and political change. Students are uniquely idealistic, energetic, forward-thinking, and open-minded as a group, and in turn provide a perspective to policy development that contributes to accelerated progress.

Like in most systems of higher education, the students of SUNY had to fight for formal recognition as a core stakeholder in university policy and a seat at the table in an official capacity. The tireless efforts of the activists during the student movements of the late 1960's and those that followed them over the course of 25 years can be credited for the formation of the SUNY Student Assembly in its modern form in 1992.

Another 25 years has passed and the Student Assembly is positioned to spearhead another leap forward for student representation in the decision-making processes of New York State and the SUNY system. Student leaders throughout the diverse set of SUNY campuses are in near unanimous agreement that the Student Assembly has improved markedly as an organization in recent years. More students than ever have been reached, advocacy efforts have been strengthened, and victories for students have been delivered.

Moreover, the Student Assembly received a major budget increase from SUNY System Administration during the Spring of 2018, validating the successes of recent years and provide resources to continuing building momentum.

In today's world of daunting long-term challenges and the opportunity for institutions of higher education, led by their students, to solve them, **it is time for the Student Assembly to commit to a vision of being a more influential and effective organization than ever before.**

The Student Assembly of the future is one with nearly limitless potential to rise as an influential advocacy organization, a powerful network of future leaders, and a well-funded organization with the state's top talent pipeline. SUNY student leaders that were consulted for the development of this plan buy-in the potential of the Student Assembly and were eager to share their ideas for how it can fulfill its most ambitious visions in the coming years.

The consensus best strategies for the Student Assembly fall into the following categories:

- 1. Strengthening the Student Assembly network**
- 2. Increasing the influence of SUNY student advocacy**
- 3. Developing SUNY student leaders**
- 4. Increasing organizational capacity**

This plan includes key initiatives that will lead to progress in each of these areas.

One of the Student Assembly's primary functions is **to serve as a network for SUNY Student Government Association (SGA) leaders to share their ideas and positions in order to contribute to a consensus state-level advocacy effort**. This network can always be strengthened, and the Student Assembly is committed to exploring all means toward this end in the coming years. Among the pathways to strengthening the network are finding the best digital tools to connect students across a large geography, enhancing the network building functions of the Student Assembly conference, seek to build a physical presence on each campus, and facilitate new sub-networks that are sector and issue specific.

A stronger network will help the Student Assembly engage more students in advocacy efforts, and thereby **increase the influence of SUNY student advocacy**. Empowering students to be involved in advocating university-wide concerns is the primary goal of the Student Assembly and will lead to greater effectiveness in seeking state policies that better serve student interests. The Student Assembly will also seek to strengthen its relationships with advocacy partners that share students interests and develop resources for students to increase awareness and civic engagement throughout the SUNY system.

Improving as an organization each year will require **developing SUNY student leaders better than ever before**. It is a constant challenge for student organizations to recruit, train, and retain capable officials and staff. The Student Assembly will seek to position itself a standard-bearer of procedures that create a reliable student leader pipeline in the coming years by revamping procedures to recruit and train new people and by sharing best practices with campus Student Government Associations.

In order to do all of these things at a level that maximizes the positive impact of SUNY students, the Student Assembly has to **deliberately build organizational capacity** in the coming years. Doing so requires a commitment to pursuing a bigger base budget, developing new creative revenue sources, and implementing policies and procedures that maximize efficiency.

A stronger Student Assembly is good for SUNY and better for New York State. Higher Education as an institution faces challenges that require increased efforts from all stakeholders to address, especially from students. There are even larger economic, political, social, and environmental challenges to humanity that today's students will have to grapple with for decades.

The Student Assembly provides a platform for students to engage in high-level advocacy and begin their lives as civic leaders in New York State and beyond. By developing this plan, the Student Assembly is asserting its ability to grow its potential for positive impact in the coming years.

In addition to devising strategies that will increase effectiveness in the coming years, this document also contains basic information about the Student Assembly to serve as a resource for all of its stakeholders. One of the key findings from the process of developing this strategic plan was that the Student Assembly needs to increase awareness among student leaders and its partners about the structure, mission, and goals of the organization.

The following pages provide a roadmap for the Student Assembly leadership on what to do in order to revolutionize the organization, a guide for student leaders on how to get more involved, and a statement for the Student Assembly's partners on what the organization stands for.

Summary of strategies and initiatives:

Strengthening the Student Assembly Network	Continuously seek to best utilize digital tools to strengthen the online networks
	Reimagine the conference
	Build a physical presence on each campus
	Create new sub-networks
Continuously improve advocacy activities and impact	Increase the number of students that participate in advocacy through the Student Assembly each year
	Create resources to educate students on NYS government processes and Student Assembly advocacy issues
	Strengthen relationships with key advocacy partners
	Use media to build support for advocacy positions in the broader public
Develop Student Leaders	Revamp procedures for recruiting and training new members of Student Assembly leadership
	Strive to recruit a Student Assembly leadership team that is as representative of the diverse SUNY student body as possible
	Develop resources for Student Government Associations
Build Organizational Capacity	Pursue a larger baseline budget for the Student Assembly
	Develop creative new sources of revenue
	Streamline workflow efficiency with defined policies, procedures, and deadlines.

Who we are

Purposes: The Student Assembly shall be the official organization by which State University students may participate in University-wide governance. The Student Assembly shall provide for the following:

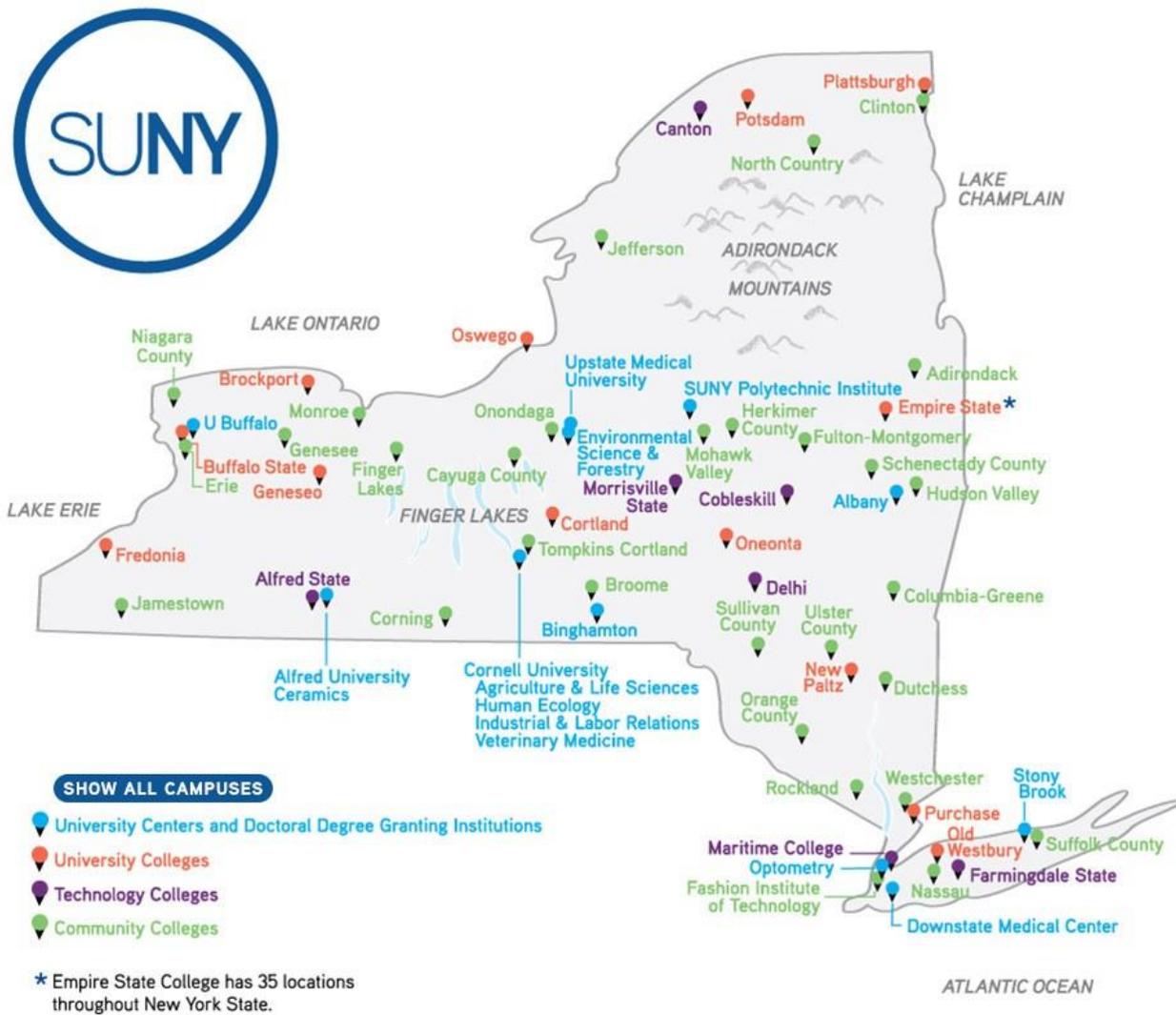
(a) A forum for consultation and the exchange of information between State University students, the Chancellor, and the State University of New York Board of Trustees on matters of a University wide nature which affect student concerns.

(b) A procedure for electing the student member of the State University of New York Board of Trustees.

(c) A communications network for campus student government leaders.

*From SUNY Board of Trustees Policies





The students of SUNY are numerous, dynamic, and diverse. They are about 600,000 strong as of 2018, attending 64 campuses in the largest system of higher education in the country. They include traditional students directly out of high school seeking a four-year degree and living on campus, as well as the often nontraditional students at SUNY's 30 community college retooling their skill-set for mid-career advancement. The students of SUNY are engaged in some of the world's most cutting-edge research, they come from dozens of countries around the world, they are parents, they represent every socioeconomic and ethnic group, and **they are all represented by the Student Assembly.**

Shared Governance in the SUNY System

The Student Assembly formally represents SUNY students at the highest levels of the SUNY system.

The Student Assembly is empowered by state-law and SUNY Board of Trustees policy to be the formal representative body for students within the governance structure of the SUNY System. SUNY's top governing body is the **SUNY Board of Trustees**, which the Student Assembly President sits on as a voting member. Other members of the Board of Trustees include:

- 15 members appointed by the Governor with the consent of the legislature
- The President of the University Faculty Senate (non-voting member)
- The President of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges (non-voting member)

The Student Life Committee: Where the Student Trustee drives the conversation on student interests

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the SUNY Board of Trustees reintroduced the Student Life Committee, which is co-chaired by the Student Trustee and gives the Student Assembly an opportunity to drive system-wide policy. During the last year topics discussed and acted on through the committee include food insecurity, mental health, and gender inclusivity.

SUNY Board of Trustee Chair H. Carl McCall on shared governance



I am pleased to have the opportunity to voice how important the SUNY Student Assembly is to the State University of New York. The representation it offers students at the system-wide level is essential to meaningful shared governance.

The SUNY Board of Trustees is tasked with overseeing the administration of SUNY's sixty-four campuses, which in turn serve over six hundred thousand students. This is a monumental task. The Board regularly seeks to engage as many SUNY system stakeholders as possible. Incorporating the student voice into system-wide governance is perhaps the most essential element of this engagement.

The State University of New York demonstrates its commitment to the value of student input by having a permanent voting seat on our Board of Trustees for the President of the SUNY Student Assembly.

Having the leader of the system-wide student government a party to all board discussions, deliberations, and decisions ensures that the student voice is heard at the highest levels of power within SUNY.

The votes of the Student Assembly President on the Board of Trustees are decided after serious and thoughtful engagement with students across the system. I urge all students to engage in that process.

The Student Assembly has had a tremendous impact on SUNY policy throughout my tenure as Chairman. I am confident that will continue for many years to come.

While the Board of Trustees create and oversee system-wide policy, operations are led by the **SUNY Chancellor**. The Student Assembly President has traditionally been a member of the Chancellor's cabinet.

Through these roles, the Student Assembly President and their leadership team represent SUNY student interests to senior staff and trustees. The Student Assembly President also appoints many students to serve on system-wide task forces and committees of the UFS and FCCC.

The importance of shared governance in institutions of higher education is recognized by SUNY and university systems across the country. Students are empowered as members of the institutional decision making alongside faculty. The Student Assembly is one of three system-wide organizations formally participating the shared governance process, alongside the UFS and FCC.

SUNY Chancellor Kristina Johnson on shared governance

As Chancellor, I value the governance structure that encourages consensus among a diversity of perspectives. With its permanent voting seat on the SUNY Board of Trustees, the Student Assembly provides an empowered voice to remind us that the board is working for the people it represents—our students.

I commend the Student Assembly for advocating with a unified agenda on topics our students care about. In recent years, it has provided leadership to SUNY on important issues, including successfully pushing for a “ban the box” initiative on school applications, calling for additional mental health support for students, and addressing food insecurity.

This deeply felt sense of commitment is palpable at the Student Assembly conferences, where I hear directly from students who share their innovative ideas about how SUNY can do more. The Student Assembly exemplified the power of higher education to motivate students to serve and work toward something bigger than themselves. I am proud that SUNY holds the contributions of its Student Assembly in such high regard.

Working together with the Student Assembly, we will continue to make SUNY System not only be the largest comprehensive system of higher education in the country – but also the best.



The Student Assembly's shared governance peers: The University Faculty Senate (UFS) and the Faculty Council of Community Colleges(FCCC)

About UFS:

Article VII of the SUNY Policies of the Board of Trustees states “the Senate shall be the official agency through which the University Faculty engages in the governance of the University. The Senate shall be concerned with effective educational policies and other professional matters within the University.” The UFS membership consists of the Chancellor of the University, two University representatives having University-wide responsibilities and representatives from each State-operated unit and contract college.

UFS President Gwen Kay on working with the Student Assembly



Having a lifelong love of History (Professor of History), I will begin with Socrates. He was one of the first people, known, to integrate the concept of shared governance into his philosophies. By answering a question with a question, the Socratic Method is a perfect (early) example of sharing the learning with the learner.

The government model in the United States can be traced back to Lincoln's Gettysburg Address where the concept of shared governance was stated, quite simply, in His statement “of the people, by the people, for the people” (1863).

Today, I, we, at the University Faculty Senate believe governance of a body of people can only be truly accomplished if all parties are represented in their views, opinions and concerns.

One of the most effective tools of our time is a strategic plan to guide a body as to where they came from, where they are going and the vision of the leaders who are responsible to bring that group into the future.

This strategic plan is only a beginning for the Student Assembly. I urge you to push harder, listen more intently, live passionately, and serve your peers with pride and dedication. The University Faculty Senate is always here for the Student Assembly as a resource and a partner in governance.

About FCCC:

The Faculty Council of Community Colleges (FCCC) is the official agency through which the SUNY community college faculty engages in the governance of the University. Founded in 1967, The FCCC focuses on matters relating to community college faculty and system-wide educational policies and other professional matters of the State University of New York, and in those areas the FCCC. The voting members of the Faculty Council includes one faculty delegate (or alternate) from each of the 30 community colleges and the President of the Faculty Council.

FCCC President Nina Tamrowskion working with the Student Assembly



The Faculty Council of Community Colleges promotes shared governance, academic freedom and faculty purview over academic matters. Shared governance in particular depends on strong partnerships with SUNY's other governance bodies: the Student Assembly and the University Faculty Senate. The Faculty Council's relationship with the Student Assembly is vital to the success of our organizations.

The Faculty Council and Student Assembly work together to promote the value of shared governance at the campus and system levels. At the system level, our organizations collaborate on SUNY's advocacy agenda and we support each other's positions on issues. Community college faculty work hard to ensure seamless transfer and provide a valuable core curriculum across all campuses, which serves students' best interests.

At the campus level, the faculty and student experience is inextricably connected in and out of the classroom. Community college faculty are well-positioned to launch students onto a path of academic success. Faculty are deeply entrenched in providing integrity in our academic courses and programs, often serving as advisors for student clubs and organizations, and offering sound academic advising and mentoring to students.

I have heard faculty loudly oppose tuition and fee increases and stand up to protect their undocumented students. I have heard students call for greater funding for academic programs and promote hiring of more full-time faculty. Our overlapping interests can be channeled into our governance bodies to effectively address the challenges we face.

As President of the Faculty Council, I have seen firsthand the tremendous impact the student-faculty partnership can have in strengthening our institutions and enhancing shared governance and joint decision-making. Our missions are naturally aligned, and the resulting partnership is perhaps the strongest agent for change in higher education. The FCCC is committed to strengthening this partnership in governance for years to come.

Community Colleges in the SUNY System: What you need to know

- There are 30 community colleges in the SUNY system.
- There are over 200,000 community college students enrolled in credit-bearing programs as of Fall 2017, for nearly 50 percent of the system's enrollment.
- Funding for community colleges is shared between the state, local counties, and tuition from students.
- Each Community College Board of Trustees is made up of five members appointed by the sponsor county, four members appointed by the governor, and a student trustee elected by the student body.
- Community colleges in the SUNY system serve a mixed-purpose of providing a transfer path to students seeking a higher degree, and offering career-driven two-year programs in trades and vocations.

The Student Assembly's Organizational Structure

The Student Assembly develops its advocacy positions through an organizational structure that offers opportunities to every sector and campus to participate. This includes the **General Assembly, Executive Committee, Executive Cabinet, and Executive Board.**

Twice each year, once in the Fall and once in the Spring, the General Assembly gathers for business at Student Assembly conferences. Each campus has the opportunity to send one voting delegate for every 4,000 FTE students enrolled at their school that can vote on official business of the Student Assembly.

Each month between General Assembly meetings, the **Executive Committee (EC)** meets to vote on official business. The EC includes 16 representatives elected by peers within their sector as follows:

- 3 representatives from doctoral granting institutions (DGIs) 2 representatives from graduate students at DGIs
- 2 representatives from agricultural and technical colleges
- 3 representatives from university colleges
- 6 representatives from community colleges

About Student Assembly Representatives:

- Elected at Student Assembly conferences by a caucus of their sector
 - Depending on the sector, may represent 2-6 campuses
 - Responsible for maintaining contact with the campuses they represent through that campus' student government association, representing the best interests of the students of the campuses they represent on the Executive Committee, and serving as a resource and fostering the success of the student government association(s) of the campuses they represent
-

Every SUNY campus has a representative on the Student Assembly Executive Committee. If you are a student, know who represents you!

Members of the Executive Cabinet also typically attend monthly EC meetings. The positions and structure of the cabinet varies from year to year and is at the discretion of the Student Assembly President.

Common positions in the cabinet in past years include:

- Chief of Staff
 - Director of Legislative Affairs
 - Director of Communications
 - Director of Academic Affairs
 - Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
 - Director of Sustainability
 - Director of Campus Safety
-

About the Student Assembly Executive Cabinet:

- Organizational chart is developed by the incoming President and approved by the Executive Committee, then job openings are advertised (hiring and interview process is typically in May)
 - Members of the cabinet carry out responsibilities as directed by the Student Assembly President
 - Responsibilities often include policy development, advising the President, and interacting with relevant SUNY-system staff
-

Leading the General Assembly and Executive Committee is the **Student Assembly Executive Board**. Members of the Executive Board include the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. They are each elected by the General Assembly at the Spring meeting and serve one-year terms beginning on June 1.

Core duties of the President:

- Oversees all business of the Student Assembly
- Serves as a member of the SUNY Board of Trustees
- Serves as a member of the NYS Higher Education Services Corporation Board of Trustees
- Presides over Student Assembly and Executive Committee meetings
- Official spokesperson of the Student Assembly
- Appoints members of the Executive Cabinet and committee chairs
- Organizes transition of officers between election and June 1
- Appoints student representatives to system-wide task forces and committees
- Submits a monthly report

Core duties of the Vice President:

- Performs all duties vested in the President in their absence
- Supports activities of Student Assembly committees, especially the Executive Committee
- Responsible for the organization of the fall and spring General Assembly meetings, the Executive Committee meetings, and the transitional meeting
- Submits a monthly report



Core Duties of the Treasurer:

- Presents financial reports at all Student Assembly and Executive Committee meetings
- Presents a fiscal-budget to the General Assembly for approvals
- Responsible for all Student Assembly finances and fundraising

Core Duties of the Secretary:

- Keeps and is in charge of all Student Assembly documents
- Records and distributes minutes at all meetings of the General Assembly and Executive Committee
- Chief Communications officer of the Student Assembly
- Maintains SUNY Snapshot

The Student Assembly's work is further supported, and often driven through, its committee structure. There are three **Student Assembly committees** defined as standing committees in governing documents:

Rules Committee

State Operated Campuses Committee

Community Colleges Committees

Resolutions, initiatives, event planning, and other core activities are often developed and executed through committee work. Appointment to membership of Student Assembly committees are at the discretion of the President.

In addition to the standing committees, the Student Assembly has had a number of committees that have consistently been part of the organization's functioning in recent years. These include legislative affairs, academic affairs, finance, sustainability, campus safety, and diversity, equity and inclusion.

The Student Assembly maintains this organizational structure as defined by its governing documents, **Article XVII of the SUNY Board of Trustees policies** and the **Student Assembly By-Laws**.

In 1992, the SUNY Board of Trustees undertook an initiative to reform the structure of the Student Assembly. The resulting reorganization was codified as Article XVII of the SUNY Board of Trustees Policies. The Student Assembly is regulated by this policy as part of New York State Law. Article XVII includes definitions of the following:

- Establishment and Purpose
- Membership in the Assembly: defines how many voting delegates each campus receives at general Assembly meetings
- Officers: Defines the Executive Board and procedures for their elections
- Organization: Defines the composition of the Executive Committee and responsibilities

The Student Assembly is further governed by **By-Laws**, which are passed by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly. They reiterate many of the statutes in Article XVII and additionally include the following:

- Resolutions and actions:
- Duties of the Executive Board: Lays out core duties listed on previous page.
- Executive Committee: Enumerates compositions and membership
- Executive Cabinet: Grants President the role of appointing members to the cabinet
- Committees: Defines standing committees of the Student Assembly and procedures for creating new committees.
- Election Policies and Procedures: Defines process for electing officers to the Student Assembly.

Thanks to the hard work of the Student Assembly Executive Board, Executive Committee, Executive Cabinet, and General Assembly, progress is made on student interests every year.

Student Assembly Spotlight victories:

In-state tuitions for veterans: After passing a resolution in 2013 and two years of strong advocacy, the Student Assembly's position that non-resident veterans should pay in-state tuition at SUNY campuses was adopted by the SUNY Board of Trustees.

Ban the Box: The Student Assembly passed a resolution at its Spring 2016 General Assembly meeting calling on SUNY to eliminate questions on college applications asking whether or not the applicant had been convicted of a felony. These questions often appear as a check-box on applications, giving rise to the slogan "Ban the Box" to represent the advocacy movement. Later that Fall, the SUNY Board of Trustees adopted this policy giving thousands of New Yorkers a better opportunity for a second chance.

SUNY Board Student Life Committee: In 2016, after over a year of planning the reinstatement of a SUNY Board Committee chaired by the Student Trustee, the Student Life Committee was reinstated, giving the Student Assembly an enhanced position in impacting SUNY policy.

**INSIDE
HIGHER ED**

SUNY Bans the Box

By **Scott Jaschik** // September 15, 2016

"In New York, the SUNY Student Assembly has been pushing to drop the convictions question. System administrators conducted a lengthy review of the policy before proposing the change."

Challenges and Opportunities in the Higher Education Landscape

The Student Assembly strives to always be highly informed of global trends that impact its strategy and to play a role in educating students that are involved in its advocacy. Students are the leaders of the future and understand that higher education can play a critical role in solving the most pressing problems of the day.

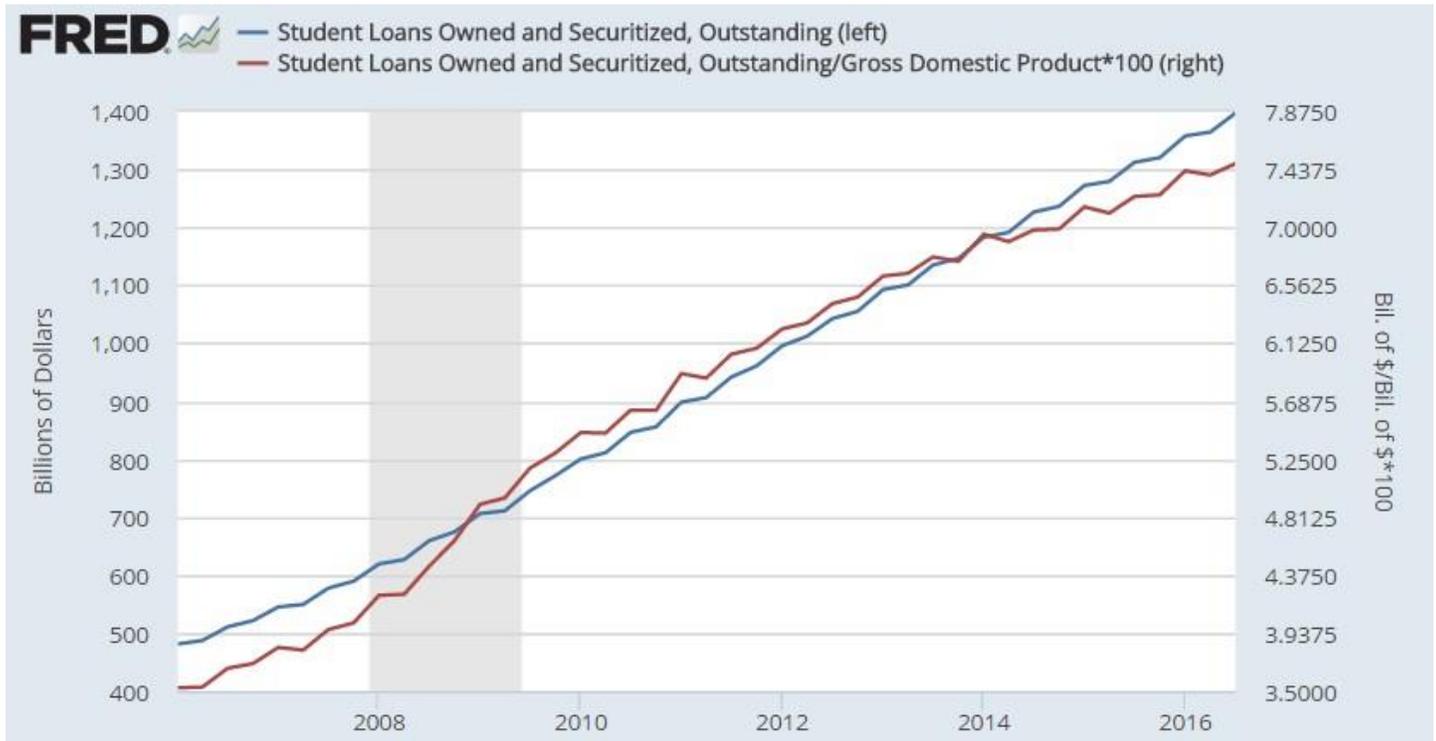


There are many issues of concern to the Student Assembly’s strategy in the coming years. Central to addressing all of them with proper resources is the **rising level of student debt across the country**. Following the financial crisis ten years ago, state funding for public higher education was cut throughout the United States, with New York being no exception. As a result, institutions of higher education have raised tuition rates to avoid large spending cuts. In SUNY, New York State resident students paid \$4,350 in tuition per year in 2008-2009 at state-operated campuses. In the 2017-18 academic year, that rate has risen to \$6,670. During this time, state funding has stagnated and students have continuously borne a higher percentage of the total cost burden for their education. Current NYS policy is that the Board of Trustees can raise tuition at state-operated up to \$200 each year, and the Board has approved a maximum increase every year since this policy was instituted. While the Student Assembly advocated in favor of the

original institution of a Board-controlled tuition policy, it has advocated against tuition increases through this policy in recent years.

This is a national issue that has drawn significant attention, with total student debt eclipsing \$1 billion in recent years. SUNY has the opportunity to be a leader in expanding access and affordability and reversing this trend, and the Student Assembly has an opportunity to be a driver of that change.

In order to do be strong advocates, the Student Assembly knows the **importance of understanding New York State Government’s legislative and budgetary processes**. Decreasing the debt burden for students while maintaining educational quality requires a significant increase in state funding for SUNY. In the 2017-18 fiscal year, SUNY received about \$3.87 billion in state tax support.



National student debt increase in the last ten years (from US Federal Reserve data)

Steps in SUNY's Budget Process:

1. The SUNY Board of Trustees approves a budget request for the following at the November or December meeting to be sent to the Governor's staff in preparation of the Executive Budget
2. The Executive Budget is released in January
3. Leaders of the New York State Senate and Assembly negotiate with the Governor on a budget to be signed into law by April 1
4. SUNY then creates a budget for the fiscal year based on the state's enacted budget

The Student Assembly understands that having an impact on college affordability in New York State requires involvement at each step in this process. Other programs funded by the state that the Student Assembly has advocated for in the past and relate to affordability include:

- The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP): Need based grant program with a maximum award of \$5,165 as of 2017.
- The Excelsior Scholarship Program: Program passed in 2017 that provides additional funding to cover the full cost of tuition for students from families earning up to \$120,000, after other grants are exhausted.
- The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP): Provides a free education, often vocational, for students that meet academic and socioeconomic requirements.

While the political environment of New York State is the largest determinant of state funding for SUNY and affordability for students, **United States federal government policy** is also important. Many SUNY students have supported proposals in recent years to introduce new

federal funding programs that aim to reduce student debt. However, such a program is unlikely to be enacted in the short-term given the country's current political dynamic. The Student Assembly is conscious that the national political environment is often polarized and dysfunctional, which presents an opportunity to cultivate student leaders that stand-out by advocating professionally. There are existing programs that have been popular on a bipartisan basis in recent years that increase affordability, and that the Student Assembly has been committed to conserving and expanding.

These include:

- Subsidized federal student loans at low interest rates.
- PELL grants
- Perkins Loans

In a contentious political environment, **college campuses are often hubs of activism**. The Student Assembly's greatest strength is the passion of SUNY students and seeks to be a force for improving civic engagement in New York State.

In a rapidly changing world, students are often some of the most forward-looking and idealistic voices in the policy discussion. These voices are more valuable now than ever, as **higher education is in the early stages of technological innovation drastically changing how knowledge is delivered**.

The rise of online courseware and other educational technologies in the last ten years has threatened to upend the higher education sector. In the coming years, it is likely that these technologies will continue to improve exponentially and potentially challenge the traditional model of education that most SUNY students are familiar with. The Student Assembly

is committed to pushing SUNY to be among the most innovative institutions in the country and to leverage new technology to enhance the experience of students. If public high education can not keep pace technologically, there may be risk of private online-based education increasing its market share in the next ten years with highly-sophisticated courses and programs offered at much lower prices.

The onward march of digital technology, automation, globalization, and other major 21st century trends have not only changed the nature of education, but changed the nature of the workforce and led to increasing tension in the dual mission of higher education: career preparation vs. broad liberal arts education. The increasing cost to students has led to a public questioning on whether a college degree is worth it, many question whether they higher-education system is adequately serving as a workforce pipeline, and there are calls for reforms geared toward more targeted education programs that focus more on job training than liberal arts and citizenship.

SUNY has launched a number of initiatives in recent years aimed to keep pace with the major trends in higher education. They include:

- **Open SUNY:** Online course portal that shows all of the SUNY system's entirely online courses and degree programs.
- **Seamless Transfer:** Initiative to standardize degree requirements and transfer paths between SUNY community colleges and state-operated campuses.
- **Applied Learning:** Initiative to provide experiential education opportunities to all students in the SUNY system.
- **Micro-Credentialing:** SUNY created a task-force to explore opportunities to expand nontradition credentials and degrees that lead to marketable skills, job opportunities, and potential to pursue higher degree programs.
- **SUNY Excels:** A performance framework that incorpoates key data indicators from five broad categories: access, completion, success, inquiry, and engagement.

In the coming years, the Student Assembly strives to stay apprised of the big issues affecting higher education, as well as the broader policy environment, and advocate for SUNY to stay ahead of them.

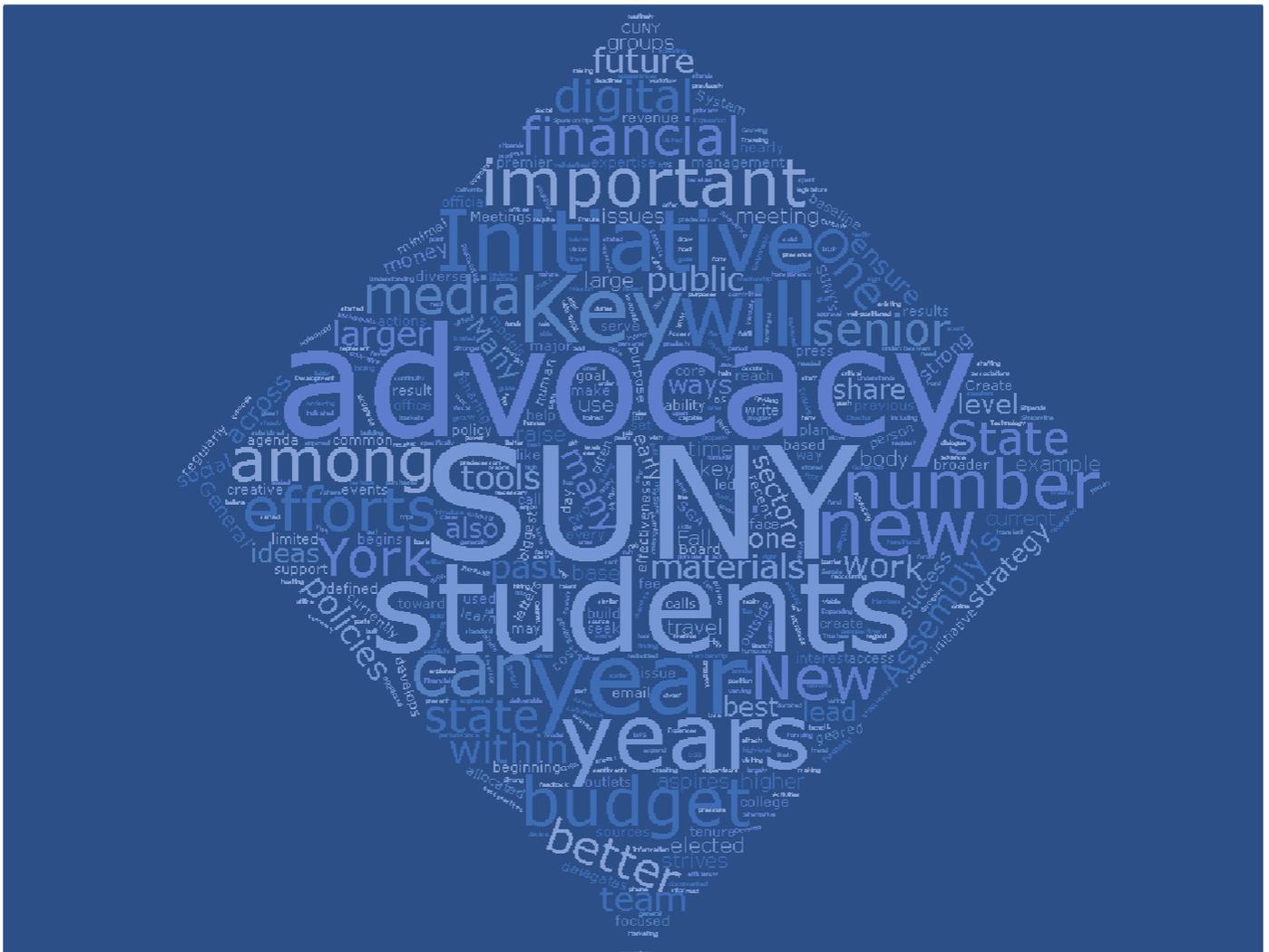
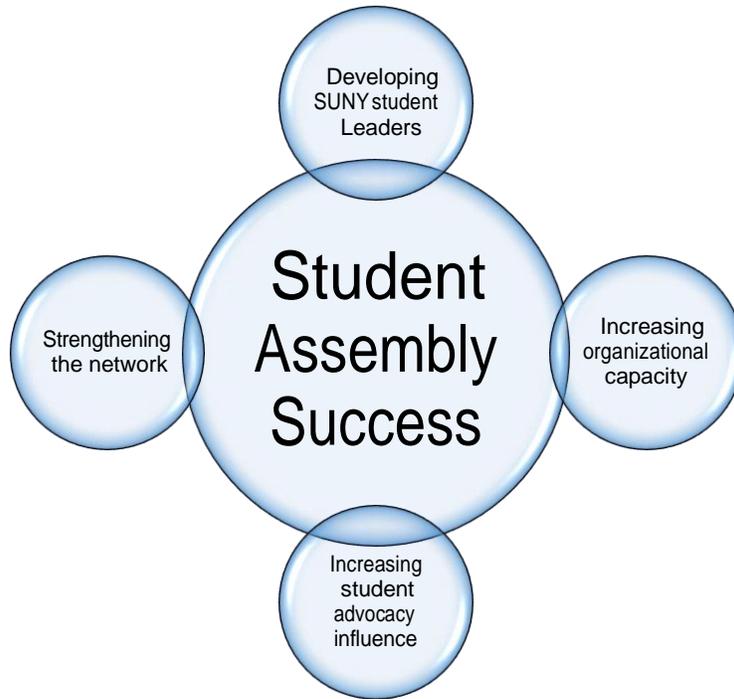


Increasing the SUNY Student Impact

Empowering students to influence SUNY policy is the mission of the Student Assembly. The strategies and initiatives included in this section are representative of the best ideas of current and former SUNY student leaders. Students should seek to increase their impact because of their strong values, and their desire to promote these values within existing institutions. This set of values underlies and motivates all of the strategic initiatives that the Student Assembly will engage in during the coming year. They include:

- **Higher education should be accessible and affordable to everyone, regardless of their background**
- **Diversity is one of the greatest strengths of the SUNY system, New York State, and the United States. Therefore, institutions should seek to develop inclusive and safe environments for people from all backgrounds**
- **Institutions should operate in a sustainable manner that protects and preserves the environment**

The Student Assembly's Four Strategic Areas



Strategy: Strengthening the Student Assembly network

Key Initiative 1: Continuously seek to best utilize digital tools to strengthen the online network

Key Initiative 2: Reimagining the conference

Key Initiative 3: Build a physical presence on each campus

Key Initiative 4: Create new sub-networks

One of the most important functions of the Student Assembly is to provide a platform and forum for the sharing of ideas of SUNY student leaders, which results in collective positions and actions. Representing 600,000 individuals in New York State that are enrolled in the SUNY system is what differentiates the Student Assembly's advocacy efforts from the many competing interests in state policy, most of which have vastly fewer constituents. Strengthening the network of SUNY student leaders will increase the effectiveness of all of the Student Assembly's actions in future years.

Being a state-wide organization with its members dispersed across a large geography, the Student Assembly's day-to-day operations are largely run in the digital sphere. Between Executive Committee meetings and the biannual conferences, the network is defined by the use of email, cloud-based file sharing, social media tools, web-based conference calls, and other digital tools.

One of the primary ways that the Student Assembly will succeed in strengthening its network in the coming years is to **regularly evaluate and improve its use of digital technology to connect more students to each other.**

In recent years, the Student Assembly has grown on social media, redesigned its website,



implemented tools for streamlining work-flow, and added hundreds of new subscribers to email listservs. This has led to a steady growth in the number of students that receive Student Assembly communications and interact with the organization. Social media groups specific to issues and positions within the Student Assembly have further enhanced the network.

In the coming years, these activities will only become more important as the exponential improvement of digital technologies continues. The Student Assembly strives to be a source of expertise for Student Government Associations throughout the system with regard to digital tools that improve the functioning of network-based organizations like student governments, and will lead by example. As an organizational best practice, each year the incoming administration should evaluate how technology is being used to facilitate productive interactions throughout the network, and devise an annual plan for improving digital strategy.

Strong use of technology will ensure that in-person time spent by members of the Student Assembly will be most productive. Most important of any of these meetings are the Spring and Fall Student Assembly Conferences, where the General Assembly conducts its business meeting. Many members of the Student Assembly believe that **reimagining the conference** is one of the best ways to improve the organization's network.

In current form, Student Assembly conferences draw over 300 students from nearly 50 of SUNY's 64 campuses. About 80 of them participate in the General Assembly business meeting as voting delegates, and the rest attend professional development workshops. Top state policy-makers and SUNY officials routinely attend as speakers to all attendees.

Many of the suggestions on how to improve the conference push the limits of time and resources

available to the Student Assembly. However, the core goals expressed by those that see an opportunity to improve the conference can be achieved incrementally without significantly altering the model of the conference. They include:

- Increase opportunities for attendees to learn information about the Student Assembly through materials, tabling, or workshops
- Improve workshops and attach opportunities for further involvement and training.
- Improve the marketing of elections and open positions to increase the number of students interested in advancing through Student Assembly leadership
- Increase networking opportunities and consider networking programming by sector or advocacy issue
- Ensure that conference attendees are part of all relevant communications channels for SUNY student leaders

In the future, there may be opportunities to drastically expand and reshape the Student Assembly conference with an extra day, significantly higher attendance, and more programming for non-voting delegates, which the Student Assembly should consider as resources allow.

Most conference attendees interact with the Student Assembly on a minimal basis outside of these two weekends per year. As a result, one of the most common suggestions for improvement among SUNY student leaders is for the Student Assembly to **be more physically present on campuses**.

The prospect of Student Assembly visiting each of SUNY's 64 campuses in a year is a challenge to the organization's human and financial resources. Currently, six campuses host an Executive Committee meeting each year and

another handful are visited by Student Assembly senior leadership for other system-wide events or independently scheduled meetings. The ability for Student Assembly leadership to make additional trips is often constrained by their ability to pay for their own travel or their busy schedules.

However, the Student Assembly recognized that with better planning it can reach more people in person every year, and that doing so will have a major impact on system-wide awareness for Student Assembly activities. Without increased financial resources, this will require detailed travel planning and budgeting at the beginning of a new administration's term. In addition to more in-person campus visits from Student Assembly officials, physical materials for distribution through campus SGA offices will also be considered.

One possible way to reach more students in person is to develop regional programming,

which was suggested repeatedly by current members of the Student Assembly. Similarly, some SGA leaders suggested introducing events specific to their sector (for example a community college focused event). Both of these ideas fall into the category of **developing stronger sub-networks** within the larger Student Assembly network, and when feasible complementing those sub-networks with targeted programming.

Discussions of the General Assembly are inherently broad, because of the need to be applicable at a system-wide level. However, there are often issues that are specific to a given sector or region where student interests can be served by mobilizing relevant parts of the Student Assembly network. In the coming years, the Student Assembly will seek to better delineate and segment its network and provide customized services to each.

What SUNY SGA Leaders Can Do:

The Student Assembly is stronger when all 64 campuses are heavily engaged and its leadership team, cabinet, representative, committee members, and conference attendees are representative of the entire system. Some campuses throughout the system have institutionalized their relations with the Student Assembly through their governing documents and formal roles. Beyond staying in contact with members of the Student Assembly Executive Committee and encouraging members of your team to seek positions in Student Assembly leadership, here are some of the best practices that others throughout the system have implemented:

- Having an officer designated as a Student Assembly liaison by their formal job responsibilities and have them regularly report at meetings.
- Electing one or more of your campuses voting delegates either by the whole student body or by the senate.
- Keeping Student Assembly information in your office and distributing materials.

Strategy: Continuously Improve Advocacy Activities and Impact

Key initiative 1: Increase the number of students that participate in advocacy through the Student Assembly each year

Key Initiative 2: Create resources to educate students on NYS government processes and Student Assembly advocacy issues

Key Initiative 3: Strengthen relationships with key advocacy partners

Key Initiative 4: Use media to build support for advocacy positions in the broader public

In one word, what the Student Assembly does is advocacy. All other functions serve to improve this purpose, and to enhance the influence that students have on decision-making processes throughout the SUNY system and New York State. Historically, successful student advocacy efforts have been driven by power in numbers. This is why the most important way for the Student Assembly to improve its advocacy efforts is to **increase the number of students that participate**.

There are many ways that students have participated in advocacy with the Student Assembly in the past. They can attend a Student Assembly lobby day in Albany or Washington D.C., participate in mass efforts to call their elected officials, visit their elected official in their district office, write letters, sign petitions, or any number of activities. In the coming years, the Student Assembly aspires to increase the number of students doing all of these things across the board.

Increasing the number of students that participate in advocacy requires greater engagement with the Student Assembly overall, better planning and marketing from the legislative affairs team, and in some cases additional financial resources. Building large grass-roots movements is not easy, but the Student Assembly is committed to setting benchmarks based on previous years that will lead to sustained growth in the number of students participating in advocacy.

One of the biggest challenges of student advocacy efforts is the general low level of civic engagement and awareness among college students, especially at the state level and even more so in the higher education sector. The Student Assembly's goal is to play a role in reversing this trend, and to raise awareness to all SUNY students of the importance of advocating for one's interest during policy-making processes. To help create a more informed and engaged student body, the Student Assembly can **create educational materials on New York State government and SUNY student interests**.

Students would benefit from having access to materials created by other students that share their interests, include:

- Informational documents on government and advocacy processes within SUNY and New York State government.

- Guides on how-to find your elected official, learn their positions, schedule meetings, write letters, and make effective phone calls.
- Widely distributed and publicly available memos on Student Assembly positions and summary of legislative agenda.

While effective advocacy from students is paramount to the success of the Student Assembly agenda, there are also many organizations that share student interests and offer opportunities for leveraging additional resources. **Strengthening relationships with key advocacy partners** can lead to multiplied success in the coming years.

The Student Assembly is not the only organization that stands for affordable education, the strength of diversity, and a sustainable future. There are many groups that the Student Assembly has partnered with in the past and can do more with in the future to better serve student interests. These include:

- SUNY system government relations
- Faculty organizations such as UFS, FCCC, and UUP
- Campus administrations
- Other statewide higher education focused advocacy groups
- Other system-wide student governments, most notable the CUNY USS

The number of people and organizations that share interests with the Student Assembly is vast, and represent very large constituencies to policy-makers at every level. By increasing the number of people that join the call for items supported by the Student Assembly, the pressure mounts on policy makers to act and victories are more likely. Often, a tipping point occurs when a support for an issue is adopted by the broader public. The Student Assembly strives to be a premier advocacy organization in New York State that the public is aware of. To continue moving in this direction, a **media strategy geared toward raising awareness among the public** for the Student Assembly's positions will continue to be implemented.

The Student Assembly has enjoyed solid media coverage in recent years and has built a strong foundation to build out its press strategy. Regular press releases, soliciting guest appearances in various media outlets, and pitching stories to outlets across the state should continue and increase in the next few years.





Strategy: Develop Student Leaders



Key Initiative 1: Revamp procedures for recruiting and training new members of Student Assembly leadership

Key Initiative 2: Strive to recruit a Student Assembly leadership team that is as representative of the diverse SUNY student body as possible

Key Initiative 3: Develop resources for Student Government Associations

One of the biggest challenges that student organizations face is turnover among their leadership. One of the reoccurring sentiments among current members of the Student Assembly is that **efforts to recruit and train new leadership should be redoubled in the coming years.**

The Student Assembly strives to set the standard for how student organizations with high turnovers rates can maximize the continuity of successful initiatives and practices year to year. This requires a combination of recruiting capable new officials each year and strengthening transitional procedures.

Many ideas were shared by members of the Student Assembly to improve recruiting. Some of them include:

- Better marketing of positions and more efforts to raise awareness of ways to get involved in the Student Assembly, beginning at an earlier period during the year
- Expanding opportunities for entry-level involvement with the student assembly through internship, mentorship, committee membership, and other opportunities
- Introduce programming at Fall and Spring conferences specifically geared to recruit people into the Executive Committee
- Develop targeted programs and pathways for underclassmen to rise in the student assembly
- Increase efforts to recruit graduate students with more experience and skills into senior leadership roles in the Student Assembly

Increasing the talent pool that wish to be involved at greater levels of the Student Assembly can

Getting involved with the Student Assembly:

- Obtain contact information from sunysa.org and introduce yourself to Student Assembly leadership.
- Inquire with your campus Student Government about attending a Student Assembly conference.
- Run for a position with the Student Assembly.
- Apply to be a member of the Executive Cabinet.
- Join a committee.





only lead to increased organizational effectiveness if they are properly trained for their positions. This should include:

- Understanding the high-level mission and purpose of the Student Assembly
- Having well-defined job duties and expectations
- Access to materials prepared by their predecessor
- Training from their predecessors and other senior Student Assembly leadership early in their tenure
 - A schedule of deliverable work products that begins early in their tenure along with timely feedback from their supervisors
 - Meetings with relevant SUNY officials and other key partners

In addition to generally finding better people, the **Student Assembly is committed to recruiting a senior leadership team that is as representative of the diverse SUNY student body as possible.** The Student Assembly understands that a wide-range of perspectives are needed in order to best develop strong advocacy positions. It is important now, more than ever, to ensure that people from all backgrounds have an opportunity to succeed with the Student Assembly.

In addition to better developing human resources that are directly involved with the Student Assembly, statewide advocacy efforts can also be improved by offering to help campus Student Government Associations become better organizations by providing resources and expertise. Members of the Student Assembly senior leadership team typically have personal experience as senior officials on SUNY campus student governments, and also interact with student leaders front throughout the state.

The Student Assembly is well-positioned to **develop resources for SUNY Student Government organizations** that share best-practices from their peers and connect them with others that are facing similar challenges. Stronger campus-level Student Government Associations from throughout the SUNY system will translate to a stronger Student Assembly.

Strategy: Build Organizational Capacity

Key Initiative 1: Pursue a larger baseline budget for the Student Assembly

Key Initiative 2: Develop creative new sources of revenue

Key Initiative 3: Streamline workflow efficiency with defined policies, procedures, and deadlines

Over the last two years, the Student Assembly persistently **advocated for a larger base budget within the SUNY budgeting process**. In Spring 2018, these efforts paid off and SUNY System Administration granted the Student Assembly an investment of \$157,500 to be used over the course of two years in addition to its annual operating budget of \$55,958. While this is a major win, it is only the beginning of the path toward a sustainable funding model that allows the Student Assembly to fulfil its potential. Over the next two years, the Student Assembly will be able to expand its activities significantly while exploring pathways to a reliable model. Throughout the process of securing a larger budget, Student Assembly leadership has indicated to SUNY system officials that additional funds may be used for the following purposes:

- Increased travel for the Executive Committee
- New programming throughout the year to increase the dialogue among student leaders and awareness for Student Assembly positions.
- Expanded Student Assembly state and federal advocacy days.
- Growing the Student Assembly conference.
- Introducing stipends for Representatives and Executive Cabinet members to reward them for their work, add a recruitment tool, and ensure that no one is excluded from opportunities in the Student Assembly because of their financial means.
- Marketing campaigns.
- Devoted staffing to the Student Assembly.
- Grant programs to campus Student Government Associations.

Activities like these are common among other system-wide student government organizations, which typically enjoy budgets that dwarf that of the Student Assembly. Many of these are funded by student activity fee based models. For example, the CUNY Unified Student Senate and both California system-wide student associations are funded by student activity fees, and have budgets up to nearly \$2 million as a result.

There are many viable pathways to increasing the Student Assembly budget that should be explored by each administration in the process of developing the right financial strategy for that year. These pathways include:

- Advocating for a permanent increase through the SUNY budget process, which begins in the early Fall for the following year and results in a request being sent to the Governor's office after Board of Trustee approval.

- Advocating to legislators and the Executive Branch for an increase in the Student Assembly line in the New York State budget.
- Exploring alternative funding models, such as an activity fee.

During the Spring of 2018, the Student Assembly created a task force to consider the implementation of a system-wide fee. Continuing to explore this option will be a core part of the Student Assembly strategy for a permanent budget increase, along with all alternatives listed above, and in close consultation with student leaders throughout the system.

While the Student Assembly pursues a larger base budget, it is important that it develops **creative new sources of revenue** so that the most important and cost effective new initiatives do not face a financial barrier. The Student Assembly created a new position, the Director of Development, in 2017 to work on this initiative. Some of the ideas to raise additional money in the past, with varying success, include:

- Sponsorships for the Student Assembly conference
- Fundraising at the Student Assembly conference through auctions of donated gift baskets.
- Exploration of building an alumni donor base.

It is important that as the Student Assembly aspires to increase its financial capacity, that it **develops a strong set of policies and procedures** to ensure that mismanagement is minimal.

Given the transient nature of leadership in student organizations, it is more important for them than most to have well documented and understood policies that guide new members each year. The Student Assembly aspires to be a standard-bearer among student governments in the realm of organizational management. The team in 2017-18 has started the process of reviewing and revising existing policies, and where necessary creating new ones. These include policies relating to:

- Financial management and purchases
- Travel
- Human resources – including hiring, training, performance reviews, and removal from positions
- Documentation, public information, and transparency
- Ethics and conflicts of interest
- Communications and social media
- Information Technology

Measures and Accountability

Maximizing organization performance requires tracking key metrics to foster accountability and inform activities. The Student Assembly aspires to be a national leader among student governments in tracking performance metrics related to its strategy and vision. In addition to tracking quantifiable metrics to ensure that the Student Assembly is fulfilling its strategy, it is also a best practice to have regular qualitative feedback and assessments from every level of the organization and from various stakeholder groups.

Strategic area	Measures
Strengthening the network	Number of conference attendees
	Number of campuses attended at conference
	Social media followers
	Number of students receiving Student Assembly communications
	Number of campuses visited by members of the Executive Committee
	Number of engagements with Student Assembly platforms
Advocacy	Number of students that participate in advocacy activities
	Number of campuses that participate in advocacy activities
	Number of educational materials that are distributed
	Number of policy-makers that are reached by advocacy activities
	Number of students that use advocacy resources
	Number of media mentions
Developing student leaders	Number of students running in Student Assembly elections
	Number of applicants for Student Assembly positions
	Demographics of Student Assembly leadership compared to system
	Same-year retention rate
Organizational capacity	Budget and expenditures
	Policies reviewed and instated
	Outside revenue



**Student Assembly
Advocacy Fee
Fee Committee Final Report
Fall 2018**

Chester Bennett, Chair of Fee Committee
Taryn Rackmyer, Vice Chair of Fee Committee
Jakob Webster, Treasurer
Molly Dunbar, Assistant to the Treasurer
Robert Drumm, Special Advisor to the President

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Fee Committee, Final Report	

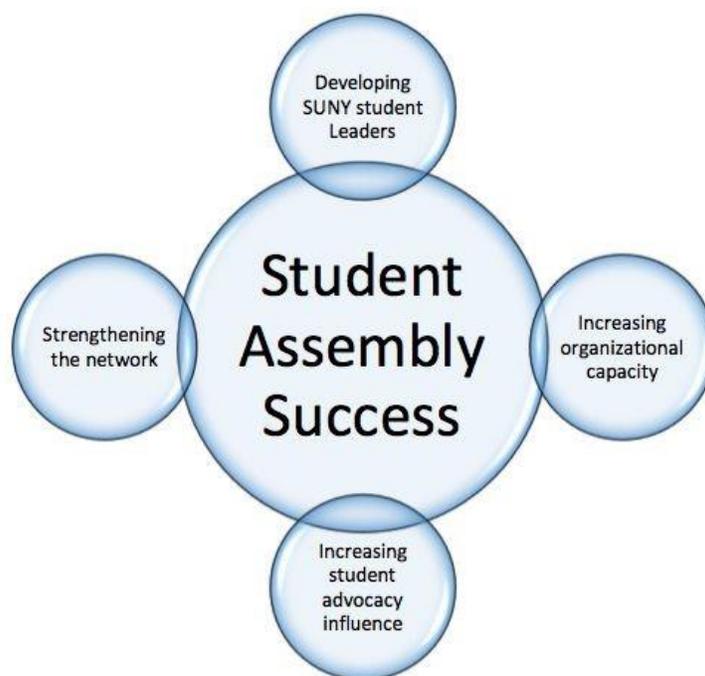
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Committee Charge & Abstract

For many years, the Student Assembly's reliance on the SUNY administration for funding has limited our ability to advocate for student initiatives. The limited budget that SUNY is able to provide us has further limited our capacity to advocate for students initiatives, provide programming and support to the diverse needs of our many campuses, and has created trouble recruiting and retaining highly qualified candidates. In addition, the fear of a funding cut for the Student Assembly, as well as the time required to work with the SUNY administration in regards to budgeting limits the scope of student advocacy.

With all of this in mind, then-President Marc Cohen formed the University-Wide Fee Committee to research how other system-wide student organizations are funded and how they make use of their funding. The committee presented their final report on March 15th, 2018, in which they recommended a transition to a fee structure as the committee found it to be "the most effective method of reaching comparable levels of financial capacity"¹ to organizations with advocacy levels similar to SUNY SA's. In August 2018, President Michael Braun and the SUNYSA Executive Committee formed the Ad-Hoc Committee to discuss the implementation of a System-Wide Student Governance Fee. Below are the results found by that committee, regarding comparisons to other state-wide systems, what revenues to expect from the implementation of a fee, and recommendations for how additional revenue could be used to bring the SUNY Student Assembly to the next level.



¹ University-Wide Fee Committee final report, March 15, 2018

**Ad-Hoc Committee to Discuss
the Implementation of a System-Wide Student Governance Fee**

The committee is charged by President Braun with developing a report that includes the following:

- 1) Formal report on the funding models used by other system-wide student governments (expanding on research conducted by past committee).
- 2) Analysis of the budgets of system student governance bodies with revenues exceeding \$150,000.
- 3) Analysis of the revenues generated by the imposition of a 25 cent, 50 cent, and one dollar per semester fees to all enrolled SUNY students and whether the fee should be prorated for part-time students.
- 4) Analysis of the Student Assembly Strategic Plan- highlighting areas of deficiency and how added revenue could address such organizational deficiencies.
- 5) Overall recommendations on the use of increased funds to support organizational operations.
- 6) Analysis of the process necessary to introduce a system-wide governance fee and statutory changes necessary to allow students to utilize TAP Award to cover it.

Please present a report to President Braun no later than November 2nd, 2018. The report will then be presented to the Student Assembly Conference.

Part 1

Funding Models of Other System-Wide Student Governments

The committee looked at six other system-wide student governments from across the United States: City University of New York University Student Senate (CUNY USS), California State Student Association (CSSA), University of California Student Association (UCSA), Student Senate for California Community Colleges (SSCCC), Oregon Student Association (OSA), and Wisconsin Student Government (WSG). WSG had no publicly available financial or budgetary information, so they will be excluded from the remainder of the report.

Of the remaining five listed above, all use student fees to fund all or part of their budget during the latest fiscal years the committee was able to access. CUNY USS had a fee of \$1.45², \$1.01 of which goes directly to their operation budget; CSSA had a fee of \$2.00 per semester³; UCSA has a complex and nonuniform fee structure, but budget based off of \$1.30 per student⁴; SSCCC had a fee of \$1 per semester⁵, and OSA had a fee of \$1.34 per semester⁶.

Of the five system-wide student governments, two have some form of opt-out feature that allows students or campuses to opt-out of paying the fee, CSSA and UCSA. The details of this opt-out system were not available, and neither was any information on approximately how many students took this option.

None of the organizations indicated any difference in fee structure of part-time and full-time students.

² <http://www.usscuny.org/uss-budget>

³ https://www.calstatestudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/2018-19-Budget-Packet_5-6-18.pdf

⁴ <https://ucsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Approved-2018-19-UCSA-Budget.pdf>

⁵ <https://sites.google.com/studentenateccc.org/ssccc/legal-authority/ssccc-recognition>

⁶ <http://www.orstudents.org/our-story/>

Part 2

Budgets of Other System-Wide Student Governments

As in Part 1, the committee looked at five system-wide student governments budgets, including the size of their budget and the budget breakdown. No budget information was publicly accessible for SSCC or OSA. Below is the breakdown from the latest year accessible for each of the remaining institutions. Expenses do vary from organization to organization, but in general spending tends to concentrate in travel, stipends, and programming/conferences.

CUNY USS (2017)⁷

CUNY Athletics	\$103,248.21
Scholarships	\$115,753.35
Personnel	\$160,539.00
Operational Expenses	\$334,981.02
Conference & Seminar Expense	\$85,000.00
Stipends for 10 Officers	\$63,000.00
Standing Committees	\$59,162.31
Cultural Activities & Special Events	\$49,018.71
Travel- General	\$19,000.00
Administrative Fees	\$53,781.13
Total	\$768,301.71

⁷ <http://www.usscunyc.org/uss-budget>

CSSA (2018)⁸

Operations	\$160,955.28
Total Compensation	\$993,152.62
Reserve	\$82,091.45
Internal Programs	\$193,004.58
Advocacy & Gov. Affairs	\$154,175.00
University Affairs	\$104,950.00
Communications & PR	\$47,500.00
Total	\$1,735,828.92

UCSA(2018)⁹

Board Expenses	\$35,325.00
Campaigns & Programs	\$24,000.00
Conferences	\$153,000.00
Government Relations	\$45,443.00
Statewide Organizing	\$29,609.00
Operations & Development	\$51,714.00
University Affairs	\$38,462.00
Personnel	\$323,526.00
Total	\$1,735,828.92

⁸ https://www.calstatestudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/2018-19-Budget-Packet_5-6-18.pdf

⁹ <https://ucsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Approved-2018-19-UCSA-Budget.pdf>

Part 3

Analysis of Revenues Generated by Various Fee Levels

In 2017, SUNY had 299,668 full-time students and 132,187 part-time students, for a total of 431,855 students.¹⁰ Fee revenues would vary based on enrollment and are difficult to predict. Below are possible revenues generated by a system-wide fee based on enrollment numbers and fee level. If the fee doesn't apply to part-time students, revenue would more closely match the 300,000 enrollment level.

The current total budget of the SUNY SA is \$141,708.00, so any fee below \$0.35 would reduce the budget at current enrollment levels.

Any proposed fee should be set at a level that accounts for future fluctuations in enrollment, and allows the Student Assembly to continue to function and adapt.

Fee per Student	Number of Students	Revenues Generated
\$0.25	300,000	\$75,000
\$0.25	400,000	\$100,000
\$0.25	500,000	\$125,000
\$0.50	300,000	\$150,000
\$0.50	400,000	\$200,000
\$0.50	500,000	\$250,000
\$0.75	300,000	\$225,000
\$0.75	400,000	\$300,000
\$0.75	500,000	\$375,000
\$1.00	300,000	\$300,000
\$1.00	400,000	\$400,000
\$1.00	500,000	\$500,000

¹⁰ <https://www.suny.edu/about/fast-facts/>

Part 4

Analysis of the Student Assembly Strategic Plan

The SUNY Student Assembly Strategic Plan, developed as the guide for growth and success of the Student Assembly from 2018-2023, depicts three primary areas that could be improved through additional revenues gained by the implementation of a student fee: outreach, individualized programming, and recruitment.

Outreach

"Most conference attendees interact with the Student Assembly on a minimal basis outside of these two weekends per year. As a result, one of the most common suggestions for improvement among SUNY student leaders is for the Student Assembly to be more physically present on campuses,"¹¹.

A significant factor in building sustainable relationships between student leaders in SUNYSA and across the 64 SUNY campuses is continuing to maintain the same level of engagement that occurs at SUNYSA conferences throughout the year. Currently, SUNYSA works primarily through digital communication with other SUNY students to collaborate on projects. However, digital communication as the primary method for students so geographically distant from each other doesn't effectively provide opportunities for support and collaboration. With additional funding from a student fee, SUNYSA could cover the cost of travel for the SUNYSA Senior Leadership to maintain a physical presence on SUNY campuses. Travel makes up a disproportionate amount of the costs to visit distant campuses. Those campus visits and networking opportunities could significantly progress relationships between SUNYSA and the SUNY campuses and make SUNYSA outreach more thorough and meaningful.

Individualized Programming

"Discussions of the General Assembly are inherently broad... there are often issues that are specific to a given sector or region..."¹²

SUNY universities and colleges are just as diverse as their student populations. The geographic location, fields of study, and individual cultures that make up each institution means that some SUNY colleges face very unique issues that other SUNY colleges do not. SUNY community colleges, agricultural-technology institutes, graduate schools, and four-year colleges all face different issues unique to their sub-groups. Upstate faces different issues from downstate. Colleges in cities face different issues from colleges in rural areas. At SUNYSA conferences, the business meeting of the General Assembly is broad enough that all students can participate in discussion and debate and form opinions. There is no opportunity for sub-groups of SUNY to meet on their own to discuss

¹¹ http://sunysa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/SUNYSA-Strategic-Plan_Final.pdf page 26

¹² http://sunysa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/SUNYSA-Strategic-Plan_Final.pdf page 27

resolutions and concerns outside of the conference. Regional programming designed to address individualized concerns would have the potential to do a better job of addressing day-to-day problems that students face.

Recruitment

"Student Assembly leadership has indicated to SUNY system officials that additional funds may be used for ... Introducing stipends for Representatives and Executive Cabinet members to reward them for their work, add a recruitment tool, and ensure that no one is excluded from opportunities in the Student Assembly because of their financial means."¹³

"...the Student Assembly is committed to recruiting a senior leadership team that is as representative of the diverse SUNY student body as possible."¹⁴

Introducing higher stipends for senior leadership positions within the SUNY Student Assembly would address three areas of deficiency within the organization- recruitment, diversity in leadership, and turnover.

The work done within the leadership positions of the SUNY Student Assembly naturally attracts people interested in public policy, administration, or related fields (communication, finance, environmental policy, etc.). Competitive financial compensation is essential to recruitment of representatives outside of these majors. Increased stipends will attract students that are looking for leadership opportunities but had not previously thought to look into the Student Assembly. An increase in students interested in SUNYSA positions will create an increase in competition for those positions leading to a higher assurance that the chosen students will be the absolute best candidates for the position. In addition, students who win their elections or are appointed into positions will have a greater respect and appreciation for their position and responsibility, naturally decreasing turnover within these positions. Many highly qualified and interested student leaders decline roles in the Student Assembly in order to pursue higher paying roles in their campus student governments or other employment opportunities. An increase in stipends would better attract and retain those students.

Higher financial compensation can diversify senior leadership by attracting underprivileged students who cannot afford to do below-market work. The SUNYSA senior leadership positions demand hours of work that underprivileged students can't afford to spend not being adequately compensated.

¹³http://sunysa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/SUNYSA-Strategic-Plan_Final.pdf page 32

¹⁴http://sunysa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/SUNYSA-Strategic-Plan_Final.pdf page 31

Part 5

Recommendations on the Use of Increased Funds

The committee used the findings from Parts 3 and 4 to make recommendations on the use of increased funds. It is important to note, that any fee below approximately \$0.35 would likely decrease the total budget from its current level, and would require spending cuts.

One concern in introducing a fee that may dramatically increase the budget, as a \$0.75 or \$1.00 would, is that the financial officers and system of the SUNY SA will not be able to properly handle such a strong increase so rapidly. In order to accommodate this concern, it would be prudent to develop a reserve account during the first two years. For example, 50% of the fee revenue could be diverted to the reserve account the first year, 25% the second year, and none each of the following years. In addition to helping the transition to a large budget, a reserve account will ensure that the Student Assembly would have money to draw from to continue operations in the event of an unexpected and sudden decrease in revenue or increase in expenses.

The committee found increases in budget lines within the three outlined areas of deficiency in Part 4 (outreach, individualized programming, and recruitment) to be most fit. These areas align with the areas discussed in Part 2 that the general spending tends to concentrate in at other organizations (travel, programming/conferences and stipends).

Outreach

By increasing the Executive Committees line, the SUNY SA could increase outreach to Western NY, bring the full Executive Committee to each monthly meeting, and cover the cost of a full December Executive Committee meeting. It is vital to the operations of the organization for senior leadership members to be able to meet in person and collaborate on continuing projects monthly. Just as internal work is best done in person, external outreach is as well, and funding travel to colleges typically farther west from normal Executive Meetings would drastically improve outreach to those colleges.

That brings us to the next point- increasing travel funds for senior leadership would expand outreach and make it easier and more feasible to build sustainable relationships between the SUNY SA and the 64 student governments.

With an increase in funding for the Bi-Annual Conferences, we could prioritize having a full General Assembly for our Business Meeting by covering their costs of attending Conference, the way we do for our Executive Committee.

Individualized Programming

Funding lines for Regional Programming and Other Large Events would help subgroups of SUNY (ex: graduate colleges, community colleges, Western colleges, Downstate colleges, etc.) meet to discuss the issues that are unique to them and vote on resolutions. Individualized programming could introduce an entirely new element to SUNY SA expanding our efficiency, outreach, and activity.

Individualized programming would efficiently address day-to-day issues the SUNY colleges face that the General Assembly can't all speak to. The opportunities that could be opened through the utilization of individualized programming would engage students outside of our conferences, and emphasize the diversity of our SUNY Institutes.

Recruitment

As discussed extensively in Part 4, an increase in stipends would address three areas of deficiency within the organization - recruitment, diversity in leadership, and turnover. An increase in stipends would better attract and retain qualified and interested student leaders that normally decline positions to pursue higher paying roles, and accommodate for underprivileged students who cannot afford to do below-market work. Higher financial compensation would decrease turnover by providing higher incentive to stay in the organization, and attracting more people to pursue leadership positions. By attracting more people and increasing competition for the leadership positions, there is a better chance that the people appointed to the positions will hold a higher respect for the position and be more likely to stay in it.

Part 6

Analysis of the Process Necessary

In order to implement a fee, the SUNY SA would need to prepare appropriately. Any organization with a sizeable budget will need to hire an accountant, a lawyer, and an auditor to ensure proper handling and management of the revenues generated by the fee. Currently, the Student Assembly relies on the SUNY administration for all of these services. Making use of SUNY's accountants, lawyers, and auditors may make sense to continue in the future. Firstly, continuing to work with the service providers we currently work with ensures a smooth transition with professionals that are already familiar with the Student Assembly and how it works. Costs would also likely be lower if the current relationships for these services is maintained, rather than seeking out new service providers.

The fee would also have to be implemented across the SUNY system, and collected from across the entire state, from Buffalo to Nassau. Below is a statement from Josh Sager, Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance and Business, regarding the process for implementing a fee:

For State-operated campuses the authority to set tuition, fees, and other charges is held within the Board of Trustees. While tuition rate setting for the 29 State-operated campuses is primarily informed by the legislative process/ existing statute, the setting of fees and other charges (such as residence hall room rates) has been delegated to the Chancellor, his/her designee, and campus presidents as follows:

- For fees charged to the majority of students (commonly known as Broad Based fees), the Chancellor and her/his designee has been empowered by the Board to work with the State-operated campuses through a process outlined in the [SUNY fee policy](#). This is similarly true for those fees associated with specific courses (for example, lab fees, etc.)
- For fees tied to a specific service (such as parking, campus gym access to the public, etc.) or for residence hall room rates / board plans, the campus president has been empowered by the Board
- For other, specific fees (such as the [Student Activity Fee](#)), the Board of Trustees has passed an official policy that governed the rules and use of funds related to the practice.

If there was to be the creation of a new, and / or "evolved", student activity fee the Board of Trustees would have to pass a resolution that modified the existing policy or created a new policy that authorized the new student charge and the guidelines around its use.

For Community Colleges, the authority to set tuition, fees, and other charges is held by each college's own Board of Trustees. The SUNY Board of Trustees annually approves the overall schedule of tuition and fees as part of the college operating budget, but does not

have direct control of each fee and, for the vast majority of fees charged at community colleges, the revenue generated by the fee are intended to directly offset a particular service (for example, a lab coat / lab supplies fee).

There are, however, two SUNY Board of Trustees approved fees to all community college students (or a particular population of all students):

1. A Technology Fee that provides revenue to improve the educational experience of the community college student
2. A Non-New York State Capital Fee that provides revenue to support the maintenance of the physical structures the students utilize

If there was to be a creation of a new fee that was charged to all community college students, the Board of Trustees would have to approve a resolution that would begin the formal rulemaking process to change the official rules and regulations of the State University to add the need to charge such a fee to the operating budget requirements.

Ad-Hoc Committee to Make a Recommendation on Student Assembly Position on Implementation of a System-Wide Student Governance Fee

The committee is charged by President Braun with the following:

- 1) Review of the report compiled by the Ad-Hoc Committee to Discuss the Implementation of a System-Wide Student Governance Fee.
- 2) Debate the merits of the implementation of a \$0.50 per semester student governance fee
- 3) Discuss possible uses for added revenue generated by such a fee
- 4) Offer a formal report with a recommendation to Conference on whether a student governance fee should be an advocacy priority for the Student Assembly

Please present a report to President Braun no later than March 15th, 2019. The report will then be presented to the Student Assembly Spring Conference.



The State University of New York
Student Assembly

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RESOLUTION

TO: Ad-Hoc Fee Committee

FROM: Michael Braun, President, SUNY Student Assembly

DATE: March 3rd, 2019

SUBJECT: Ad-Hoc Committee to Recommend SUNY Student Assembly Fee

Action Requested

That the Ad-Hoc Fee Committee of the Student Assembly of The State University of New York recommend a resolution to the General Assembly supporting a \$0.50 per semester per student fee to fund the SUNY Student Assembly.

Resolution

I recommend that the Ad-Hoc Fee Committee of the Student Assembly adopt the following resolution:

Whereas SUNYSA President Michael Braun convened a committee on February 17th, 2019 of Student Government Presidents across all sectors of the State University of New York, and

Whereas the committee was charged to review the report compiled by the Ad-Hoc Committee to Discuss the Implementation of a System-Wide Student Governance Fee, debate the merits of the implementation of a \$0.50 per semester student governance fee, discuss possible uses for added revenue generated by such a fee, and offer a formal report with a recommendation to Conference on whether a student governance fee should be an advocacy priority for the Student Assembly; and

Whereas the committee heard from California State Student Association President Mia Kagianas and USS CUNY Chairperson Haris Khan to discuss their system-wide student government fee; and

Whereas this resolution will be supplemented with a report expanding on the Fee Committee Task Force's report and making a recommendation to the General Assembly at Spring Conference; and therefore, be it

Resolved that the Ad-Hoc Fee Committee of the Student Assembly recommends that a resolution be submitted to the General Assembly at Spring Conference supporting the implementation of a \$0.50 per semester per student SUNY Student Assembly fee, and be it

Resolved that this resolution be forwarded to all SGA Presidents across the SUNY System with the final report no later than March 15th, 2019.

SUNY Student Assembly Financial Policies

The Financial Policies (FP) of the State University of New York Student Assembly (hereafter SUNY SA) shall be presented within this document. The only version that may be used to enforce financial practices is the most updated version approved in accordance to the Bylaws of the SUNY SA. Questions on financial transactions, structure, and interpretation must be directed to the Treasurer (or abbreviated as "CFO" for Chief Financial Officer).

The current version of the Financial Policies shall be published and made public after it is approved, as soon as is practicable.

The Financial Policies of SUNY SA are subject to any rules and regulations established by the State University of New York Board of Trustees or the SUNY SA Bylaws.

Article I: Coordination with Current Bylaws

Section 1:

The Treasurer will be responsible for coordinating any amendments to the Financial Policies, to prevent conflicts between the documents. "SUNY Student Assembly's Bylaws supersede the Financial Policies when addressing conflicting points of information."

However, the Financial Policies shall be enforced accordingly, to ensure that members of the Executive Board, Executive Committee, the Assembly, and the Treasurer will be held accountable for the use of all funds comprising the annual budget and any incoming revenues or outgoing expenditures.

Section 2:

All amendments to the Financial Policies must be proposed and approved by either the Executive Committee or the Assembly. There must be a majority of votes in approval of the change for it to be implemented. Prior notice of any changes must be provided to the Finance and Development Committee and voting members of the Executive Committee no later than two weeks before the beginning of the business meeting.

Article II: Documentation

Section 1:

It shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer to maintain accurate documentation of all transactions, financial statement reports, and other critical documents necessary in keeping the students of SUNY informed on the organization's activities. This includes any documents required by SUNY Administration or outside organizations that are financially involved with the organization. This may include, but is not limited to, individuals and entities that financially

sponsor SUNY Student Assembly, and any SUNY Student Assembly Alumni that financially contribute to SUNY SA. Important documentation should be accessible to members, students, and other parties using resources such as the SUNY Student Assembly website, and published within a reasonable time period after their official release and/or completion, dependent upon the characteristics of the document.

Section 2:

Documentation shall be retained depending on the purpose of the respective document and the information that the document includes. All financial statements must be stored and preserved, including but not limited to any balance sheets, income statements, expense reports, or any other critical financial statements pertinent for future audits or reviews by outside parties. All of the documentation conducted by the Treasurer and within the Treasurer department is subject to the rules and policies under the SUNY Student Assembly Bylaws.

Article III: Transfer of Funds Forms

Section 1:

The purpose of Transfer of Funds Forms are for the Treasurer to approve of the interim movement of funds from one budget line to another. Transfer of Funds Forms can only be filled out by the Treasurer or other members of the Executive Board, and must ultimately be signed and approved by the Treasurer. The Treasurer must coordinate with the SUNY Business Office to determine the necessary adjustments for any transfer of funds within any allocations from the state. This does not include transfers between funding resources, but transfers between budget lines (also known as accounts).

Section 2:

Transfer of Funds forms must be reported to the Finance and Development Committee, where the purpose of the form must be discussed to the committee members. If the committee does not support a specific transfer of funds form, then they have the right to make a motion to reverse the transaction, with a majority vote of members with voting rights capable of reversing the Transfer of Funds form. Prior notice must be reasonably provided by the Treasurer to the committee on submitted Transfer of Funds Forms.

Section 3:

The Treasurer reserves the rights to refuse a Transfer of Funds Form, but must provide the parties who completed the form a reasonable explanation and the pertinent information as to why the form was rejected. The Treasurer must maintain all standing precedents for the approval of Transfer of Funds Forms, unless they can demonstrate a significant and just cause to overturn it.

Section 4:

Only members of SUNY Student Assembly's Executive Board are permitted to submit Transfer of Funds forms. For any other individuals who would like for funds to be transferred, they must request for a member of the Executive Board to complete the form on their behalf. Any Transfer of Funds forms requesting for the transfer of funds exceeding 10% of the total amount available within the total SUNY SA budget must be submitted as a resolution to be approved by a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

Section 5:

Stipends are restricted from use in the Transfer of Funds form, unless the position is vacant and has thus resulted in a surplus of funds remaining within its specific line. An additional exception is for any terminations or resignations of or by the stipended members, which is subject to their signed contractual agreements and the requirements for members to be dismissed or resign by choice. Further requirements may be outlined in Appendix D.

Section 6:

All Executive Board members must use the form provided in Appendix A.

Article IV: Expense Request Form**Section 1:**

The purpose of the Expense Request Form is for the Treasurer to approve of expenditures necessary to further the initiatives of SUNY Student Assembly. This form is completed for the purpose of recording expenditures made using funds within the SUNY SA budget.

Section 2:

The Treasurer is the only party who may approve of Expense Request Forms or any expenses made by the organization. The Treasurer must coordinate with SUNY when necessary to communicate and verify the existence of expenses. For any procurement cards assigned for the use of the Treasurer or any additional responsible parties, they shall be the only parties permitted to use their respective procurement cards.

Section 3:

The template for the Expense Request Form is available in Appendix B.

Article V: Reimbursement Request Form

Section 1:

The purpose of the Reimbursement Request Form is for the Treasurer to record reimbursements made using funds within the SUNY SA budget.

Section 2:

All parties are required to complete the State of New York Expense Report provided by the Treasurer and obtain approval from the Treasurer for the reimbursement to be processed. All parties must submit their completed State of New York Expense Report to the Treasurer, no later than 30 days after the date of the expenditure. Any reimbursements for expenditures beyond that amount of time will not be accepted.

Section 3:

Reimbursements shall be requested using the Reimbursement Request Form, attached in Appendix C. This form shall be mandatory to use for any reimbursements, with the final approval of Reimbursement Requests to be decided by the Treasurer of SUNY Student Assembly. The Treasurer reserves the right to reject any Reimbursement Request Forms. However, for any parties whose Reimbursement Request is rejected, they shall have the right to appeal to the Finance and Development Committee, where a 2/3 vote in favor of the Reimbursement Request can override the initial decision made by the Treasurer of SUNY Student Assembly.

Section 4:

A SUNY System Administration travel voucher must be completed before travel. This form will be completed by a SUNY System member.

Article VI: Equity of Funds**Section 1:**

All funds that are provided to SUNY Student Assembly shall be dedicated to advocating for the rights of SUNY students and furthering SUNY SA's mission. These funds must support SUNY SA by a means that is efficient in providing individuals within SUNY SA equitable opportunities for advocacy. These parties include Executive Board members, Representatives, and Cabinet members. For any budget lines that are meant to be shared between a specific grouping of parties, such as Executive Board members, individual representative travel, and between comparable levels of cabinet members, these budget lines must be fairly and equitably distributed among the members of these groups to the best of the Treasurer's abilities.

Section 2:

The Treasurer shall ensure, to the best of their abilities, that parties who are affected by the aforementioned circumstances within this section be provided equitable access to the funds necessary to fulfill their responsibilities. Funds may include allocations from SUNY to SUNY SA, any lump-sum investments to the organization by SUNY, sponsorships and donations from external parties, and any other funds, with the exception of the Research Foundation Account. This account, as described further in its respective section, is meant for use in emergencies only, and is not meant to be budgeted for annual use by any members of SUNY SA.

Section 3:

Funds must be used to advocate for students on an equitable level. The students of SUNY are diverse in their backgrounds, their experiences, and their views, and must be represented appropriately in the financial actions made by any member of SUNY SA.

Article VII: Communication with SUNY

Section 1:

The Treasurer is the only member of the Executive Committee who may approve of expenditures and any other transactions involving SUNY SA's funds. No other member is to communicate a purchase request to SUNY that impacts the financial standing of SUNY SA unless they have prior written permission from the Treasurer.

Article VIII: Entrance into Contracts

Section 1:

The Treasurer is the only party who is allowed to enter into contracts with external organizations. There are exceptions, including any qualified administrators or individuals from SUNY on the organization's behalf, with permission from the Treasurer. It shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer to develop thorough contractual negotiations, with assistance from professional legal counsel, between SUNY SA and external parties. It shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer to ensure that these contracts are created in the furtherance of the organization's mission, and that contracts will not be created that do not pertain to the mission of SUNY SA.

Section 2:

The Treasurer must report any new contracts to the Executive Board, the Executive Committee, and the Finance and Development Committee, with the Finance and Development Committee to be granted the opportunity to provide counsel prior to entrance into the contract.

Section 3:

The Treasurer must provide any documents, pertaining to past contracts that are still active, to the next Treasurer, to ensure that previous contractual agreements are completed, to prevent potential legal disputes between the organization and external parties.

Section 4:

All members of the Executive Committee who receive compensation for their work in the form of stipends are required to sign a contractual agreement pertaining to their specific position within the organization. The templates for stipend contracts are available within the Financial Policies, Appendix D.

Section 5:

Executive Committee members of SUNY SA have the right to negotiate stipend contracts with the Treasurer, to ensure that they are paid for the fulfillment of their responsibilities. Any adjustments to these contracts must be discussed with the Executive Committee member's supervisor, to assure that the member's official stipend contract does not conflict with the responsibilities that have been assigned to them.

Article IX: Internal Shared Governance

Section 1:

The President of SUNY SA shall be able to provide guidance and recommendations to the Treasurer on financial decisions concerning the organization. The guidance and recommendations provided to the Treasurer by the President supersede any other guidance from any other party, to encourage the maintenance of SUNY SA's mission. However, this is in the discussion of the ranking of recommendations, and do not ultimately reflect the decision to be made by the Treasurer. The Treasurer is not obligated to follow the dictations of any member within SUNY SA in the maintenance of the organization's financial structure, and may only be obligated to follow dictations made by the appropriate members of SUNY Administration, by the interpretation of Article V, §4, clause (c) of the SUNY SA Bylaws, by local, state, or federal legislation, or by the SUNY Student Assembly Financial Policies.

Section 2:

It is the responsibility of the Treasurer to stay informed on their decisions, in determining the opinions of members of the Executive Committee, of the Finance and Development Committee, of additional concerned students, and any parties from SUNY Administration.

Article X: Preservation of Confidential Materials

Section 1:

It is the responsibility of the Treasurer to ensure that any general personal information or personal financial information they are provided is confidential, and does not breach that individual's rights to privacy and security. These pieces of confidential information may include credit or debit card information, personal addresses, social security numbers, other identification numbers, W9 forms, driver's license information, personal forms of identification, or any other information that is expected, by a reasonable person, to remain confidential.

Section 2:

If the Department of the Treasurer is to be audited, then the Treasurer shall maintain the confidentiality of these documents, by requiring that the involved parties will not, outside of their conduct in the audit, breach the privacy and confidentiality of these documents, or any legal proceedings required in an audit of our organization.

Section 3:

Any documents that are labeled as "Confidential" must also include a comprehensive list of parties who may be allowed to discuss the pertinent information, and to whom they are allowed to discuss that information with. Personal information, such as an individual's personal phone number, home address, driver's license number, social security number, or any other pieces of information that the respective person is not comfortable sharing, or required to share, with other parties, shall be considered "Confidential."

Article XI: Treasurer Reports**Section 1:**

The Treasurer shall provide the members of the Executive Committee, and the members of the Assembly, with a Treasurer's Report. The purpose of the Treasurer's Report is to inform students on the actions and initiatives of the Department of the Treasurer, and to provide updates on the organization's financial position. It is the responsibility of the Treasurer to develop these reports for every Executive Committee Meeting and for all Conferences. The Treasurer must address any questions proposed by members of the Executive Committee, by voting delegates at conferences, and by any SUNY student, on the information within their Treasurer's report.

Article XII: Finance and Development Committee**Section 1:**

The Finance and Development Committee allows for the Treasurer to address questions, comments, and advice from voting members and other participants, where there is the

presence of a platform for effective feedback. The committee may allow any student from a SUNY institution to become a member of the committee. A student may be allowed to become a voting member of the committee when their name is included on a resolution addressed to the Executive Committee, and approved by a majority vote. They may also be subject to any additional committee requirements set forth by the Executive Board.

Section 2:

The Finance and Development Committee is subject to the rules and regulations pertaining to committees within the SUNY SA Bylaws. The Treasurer is responsible for producing meeting minutes for every meeting, and provide these meeting minutes to the appropriate parties within SUNY SA, so that they may be available to access for any interested students. Any actions undertaken by the Finance and Development Committee may be overturned by the Executive Committee or the Assembly and that all actions of the Finance and Development Committee must be reported in writing to the Executive Committee.

Article XIII: Maintenance of the Department of the Treasurer

Section 1:

It shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer to manage the Department of the Treasurer and all members whose positions report to the Treasurer. Some of these positions may include, but are not excluded to, the Director of Development and the Assistant to the Treasurer. The Treasurer shall not assign any of the members of their Department with the primary responsibilities that are associated with the role of the Treasurer. These responsibilities include, but are not excluded to, the presentation of Treasurer's Reports, primary communication with SUNY Administration, the approval of expenditures, reimbursements, or any other financial transactions, signing in place of the Treasurer, the approval of any contracts, and any other responsibilities that the Executive Committee believes to be exclusive to the Treasurer.

Section 2:

The Treasurer does, however, have the power to delegate some of their responsibilities to the members of their Department, to ensure that the Treasurer shall stay efficient and effective in their work.

Article XIV: Storage of Assets

Section 1:

Assets shall be defined as any tangible or intangible items that are owned by SUNY SA, that have been purchased with any funding source that is used by SUNY SA to purchase said item(s). Assets that are owned by SUNY SA must be stored within any SUNY SA Office, and shall

be provided additional security measures if it is a material item. Any material items may include those that were purchased for more than \$500, or any items designated as material by the Treasurer.

Section 2:

For any assets that are owned by multiple parties including SUNY SA, ownership shall depend on the percentage of funding that SUNY SA dedicated to the purchasing of that item. Ownership of these shared assets shall be negotiated between the Treasurer and the related parties on an individual case basis, and be left to the discretion of the Treasurer.

Section 3:

For any assets that SUNY SA does not own but are borrowing for the purpose of the organization, it shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer to ensure that the item be returned in the condition that it was when it was lent to them. If the item has been damaged temporarily or permanently, the Treasurer must use SUNY SA funds to pay for the repair or replacement of these items, in the event of an accident. In the event that any borrowed assets are determined to be broken or stolen with intent, the individual shall be responsible for the legal consequences that may result from their actions, and for the repayment of those assets, unless refused by the court of law.

Article XV: Development

Section 1:

It is the responsibility of the Director of Development to obtain sponsorships for the organization, and to maintain connections with previous sponsors. The Director of Development shall be delegated the responsibility of the Treasurer department in communicating with outside parties exclusively within their mission to obtain sponsorships from outside organizations. The Director of Development must maintain transparency with these parties in the communication of the varying price packages that are available for sponsorship, and what companies and individuals may receive based on the amount of their donation(s).

Section 2:

The Director of Development may not, under any circumstances, approve contractual agreements between SUNY SA and any interested sponsors. This responsibility is reserved for the Treasurer, and any contractual agreements not approved by both the Treasurer and the System Administration Business Office are null and void.

Section 3:

The Director of Development must not accept any donations or sponsorships that pose an undue burden on the organization, or any donations or sponsorships that are not pertinent to the mission of the organization. Under the circumstances where a potential donation or sponsorship is offered that differs in its execution from the original process set forth by the Director of Development and the Treasurer, this donation or sponsorship must be approved by a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

Section 4:

Under the circumstances where the organization or individual that is sponsoring does not receive the benefits and perks promised to them with their donation, then they shall be refunded for their sponsorship in its entirety, to ensure that our organization preserve our relationships with our sponsors, and protect the financial security of SUNY SA.

Section 5:

The Director of Development shall ensure the maintenance of security of a sponsor's confidential information to their discretion, and under the discretion of the Treasurer. The Director of Development shall not harass or damage the reputation of SUNY SA in their communication with interested sponsors, and shall be subject to removal from their position, based on the discretion of the Treasurer.

Section 6:

The Treasurer must provide the Director of Development with the opportunity to present their progress in development to the Finance and Development Committee, and to the Executive Committee as well as the students of SUNY, under the Treasurer's Report.

Appendix A

Transfer of Funds Form Link: [Transfer of Funds Form Template](#)

Appendix B

Expense Request Form Link: [Expense Request Form Template](#)

Appendix C

Reimbursement Request Form Link: [Reimbursement Request Form Template](#)

Appendix D

Contract Template for Stipended Members: [Internal Contract Template](#)



SUNY STUDENT ASSEMBLY 2019

ADVOCACY AGENDA

Endorsed by Student Assembly
Fall Conference
November 2018



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INCREASING NEW YORK STATE'S STAKE IN SUNY STUDENT SUCCESS

On - Campus Childcare Centers

- SUNY's childcare centers help thousands of students, faculty, and staff on SUNY campuses to study and work while raising families. We support increasing the state allocation for these centers, which will help them meet the demand that currently outweighs the resources available.

Open Educational Resources

- The Student Assembly supports greater investment in SUNY's Open Educational Resources program by advocating for the reinstatement of eight million dollars of funding, allocated on a two-year basis, to be split evenly between SUNY and CUNY. It is essential that students have access to affordable textbooks and other learning resources - and OER has saved New York students a total of \$12 million in additional costs last year.

Community College Funding

- The SUNY Student Assembly supports revising the state's community college funding formula to ensure that campuses are not penalized for declining enrollment. A drop in enrollment does not necessarily reduce the need for academic and student support services on campus - and students shouldn't suffer the consequences of reduced state support.

Support for Increased Base Expenses

- The SUNY Student Assembly urges the state to cover the 2% raise in pay for faculty on our state-operated campuses as negotiated in the new UUP contract. The state should also cover the retroactive payments due to faculty this year as a result of the new contract.

Closing the TAP Gap

- The Student Assembly urges the legislature to close the TAP Gap by reimbursing campuses for the \$65 million in lost revenue for tuition credits. By closing the gap, the state would allow campuses to redirect spending towards other priorities.



Educational Opportunity Programs

- The SUNY Student Assembly urges the state to expand the SUNY Educational Opportunity Program, which helps SUNY students from low-income families afford college. An increased budget for EOP would allow campuses to offer more spots to eligible students, expand the Foster Youth College Success Initiative, and offer increased student support services.

Educational Opportunity Centers

- SUNY's Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC) offer a second chance at a diploma, or a certification for adults who are seeking access to a higher education or career advancement. The Student Assembly supports increased funding for SUNY's EOCs, which help them meet their mission to offer a second chance to thousands of New Yorkers.

Revisions to Excelsior Scholarship Program

- The SUNY Student Assembly supports revisions to the Excelsior Scholarship, including easing the student application process, guaranteeing fair treatment for students with disabilities, and streamlining the credit verification process.

Summer TAP

- The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) is a New York State funded program that provides grant assistance to help eligible undergraduate students pay for school. The SUNY Student Assembly supports creating eligibility for TAP during summer sessions. Doing so would allow SUNY students the same flexibility they have with federal pell grants.

DREAM Act

- The Student Assembly supports the passage of the DREAM ACT which would create the NYS DREAM Fund Commission and allow undocumented New York State students to eliminate obstacles to obtaining state financial aid. The Student Assembly supports the amended eligibility requirements to receive aid that allow undocumented students access to general awards, performance based awards, and TAP Grants if they can provide proof of earning a NYS High School diploma or equivalent.

Student Emergency Fund

- The SUNY Student Assembly recognizes that instances of financial hardship and unanticipated emergencies can occur throughout a student's time in college. Such instances can inhibit a student's ability to continue in school and succeed in their education. The Student Assembly encourages the state legislature to allocate an additional \$4,345,000 to SUNY for the creation of a Student Emergency Fund. Grants will be given to students to prohibit the derailment of their academic careers following tragedy.

SUNY'S COMMITMENT TO NEW YORK STATE'S FUTURE

Reducing Carbon Footprint

- The SUNY Student Assembly will continue to advocate for the State of New York's meaningful financial commitment to assisting SUNY reduce its dependence on fossil fuels by 30% by 2020.

Capital Plan Funding

- The SUNY Student Assembly will advocate for increased spending on campus infrastructure. SUNY accounts for 40% of the public infrastructure in New York State. Properly investing in SUNY's infrastructure, and ensuring that infrastructure is environmentally sustainable, will help New York meet its larger sustainability goals.

College Preparedness Program

- We support an increase in funding for grant programs that focus on better preparing low-income, secondary school students for college. The SUNY Student Assembly supports these programs because they enhance educational opportunities and offer hands-on experience to college students.

Support for SUNY Hospitals and Health Science Centers

- SUNY Hospitals and Health Science Centers treat approximately 1.3 million patients annually, educate 12,500 students each year for health, medical and biomedical careers, generate over \$5 billion in economic activity and over \$680 million in tax income, and support almost 26,000 jobs. The Student Assembly encourages the State to resume its responsibility to support the operations of the teaching hospitals and health science centers by restoring the SUNY hospital subsidy and providing the full state match owed to the SUNY Hospitals through the Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) program.

STRENGTHENING CAMPUS COMMUNITIES

Combating Food Insecurity

- The SUNY Student Assembly supports a uniform food pantry mandate across all SUNY campuses. We urge the state to provide sufficient funding to maintain and operate on-campus food pantries. Furthermore, the Assembly will advocate to meet Governor Cuomo's demand that all campuses in New York maintain a food pantry on campus or a partnership with a local organization.

Combating the Opioid Epidemic

- The SUNY Student Assembly urges the state to take greater action to combat the opioid epidemic in New York State. Increasing Narcan training for campus officials and student leaders, and investing in mental health resources for students struggling with addiction are important steps to combat the crisis.

Support for Comprehensive Sexual Assault and Harassment Policies

- The SUNY Student Assembly supports SUNY's comprehensive sexual harassment policy that includes: a definition for Affirmative Consent, a Policy for Drug/Alcohol Abuse Amnesty in a sexual violence case, a campus climate assessment policy, the Sexual Violence Survivor Bill of Rights, a Sexual Violence Response Policy, options for confidentiality when disclosing sexual violence and the student onboarding and ongoing education guide. We urge New York State to protect these policies, regardless of any changes in federal guidance.

Gender Inclusion and Equity Funding

- The SUNY Student Assembly prides itself on encouraging a system dedicated to inclusion and equity. Therefore, moving forward into 2019, SUNYSA continues to advocate for proper funding and support of legislation that strives to achieve that for all SUNY Students who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ Community. We support funding and legislation that ensures that facilities are gender inclusive and offer a third option for those who identify as non-binary or transgender.

Disability Policy and ADA Compliance

- The SUNY Student Assembly will work to ensure that all provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, particularly, Titles II, III and IV, requiring that all means of transportation, facilities and telecommunication systems be accessible to those with disabilities, are being enforced on our campuses.

Mental Health Tele-Counseling

- The Student Assembly supports continued funding for SUNY's mental health tele-counseling program.

FEDERAL ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

DACA

- The Student Assembly supports the enactment of federal legislation that guarantees legal status for DACA students. The uncertainty created by the ongoing judicial process triggered by the President's order to end the DACA program, has been incredibly harmful to students. We encourage Congress to act to eliminate this uncertainty.

Affirmative Action Protections

- The SUNY Student Assembly remains committed to affirmative action programs that assist marginalized communities in achieving success throughout the SUNY system. We recognize that while historic injustices can never fully be righted, affirmative action programs can create opportunities for those who may not have had them otherwise. The Student Assembly opposes the changes announced by the Departments of Justice and Education to federal guidance on race-based affirmative action.

Federal Student Loans

- The SUNY Student Assembly encourages the United States Department of Education to maintain low interest rates on Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Stafford Loans.

Work Study

- The SUNY Student Assembly urges the federal government to increase funding for the Federal Work Study Program which would allow more students access to the program.

Pell Grants

- The SUNY Student Assembly supports increasing the maximum Pell Grant award and expanding eligibility for the program. Students rely on Pell Grants to help not only with the cost of tuition and fees, but the associated costs of higher education including housing, meals, and textbooks. Expanding the Pell Grant program would help reduce the financial burden of achieving a higher education for students with need.

