

2024 Legislative Session Report

Budget

SUNY Downstate: UUP was successful in bringing together the Brooklyn community, legislators and union allies to defeat the Chancellor's plan to close SUNY Downstate University Hospital. The budget includes \$100 million in operating aid to cover the hospital's deficit and up to \$300 million in capital funding for capital improvements. The budget also created a nine-member Community Advisory Board for the Modernization and Revitalization of SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University. UUP will have a seat on the board representing labor. The board will hold public hearings, conduct research, and make recommendations for the future of SUNY Downstate by April 1, 2025.

While UUP won the opening battle of this fight, the union has much more work to do to ensure that we win the war. We must keep fighting to maintain SUNY Downstate as a state-operated public hospital staffed with UUP members that continues to provide the in-patient services that the Central Brooklyn community needs and deserves.

Operating Aid: The enacted budget includes an additional \$114 million in operating aid for state-operated SUNY campuses, in addition to the recurring \$163 million provided in last year's budget.

Full-Time Faculty Funding: The budget provides \$53 million for hiring full-time faculty at SUNY state-operated campuses and community colleges.

Hospitals: The enacted budget again includes debt service relief, totaling \$79 million. It does not however, cover employee fringe benefits or increase funding for SUNY Upstate or Stony Brook hospitals.

EOP: The budget increases funding for EOP by \$1.9 million for a total of \$44.4 million.

TAP: Total TAP funding was increased by \$55.7 million for a total of \$959.76 million, and the TAP GAP is also covered. In addition, the minimum award was raised from \$500 to \$1,000, and the salary cap was raised from \$80,000 to \$125,000 for dependent students and from \$10,000 to \$30,000 for independent students.

Capital: The budget provides the SUNY system with \$1.4 billion in capital funds.

Post-Budget

SUNY Allocations: The SUNY Chancellor and Board of Trustees have once again failed to distribute additional state operating aid in a responsible manner to address the deficits at 19 SUNY campuses. UUP continues to put pressure on the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees to revise their allocation plan to help the campuses most in need. On June 4th, we held a press

conference at the Capitol with numerous legislators calling on the Chancellor to fairly fund SUNY campuses. At the conclusion of the press conference, UUP leaders marched to SUNY System Admin and delivered thousands of postcards to the Chancellor's office demanding fair funding.

In addition, UUP drafted a legislative sign-on letter calling on Chancellor King and the SUNY Board of Trustees to reallocate state funding to address the deficits of 19 campuses.

UUP Legislative Priorities and Supported Bills:

- **Public Notice and Engagement for Hospital Closures – S.8843-A (Rivera) / A.1633-B (Simon):** This legislation amends the public health law to provide public notice and public engagement when a general hospital seeks to close entirely or close a unit that provides maternity, mental health or substance use services – **Passed both houses.**
- **Climate Change Superfund Act – S.2129-B (Krueger) / A.3351-B (Dinowitz):** This bill creates the Climate Change Adaptation Cost Recovery Program. This program will require substantial greenhouse gas emitters to help cover the cost of infrastructure improvements required to adapt to the impacts of climate change – **Passed both houses.**
- **Legislative Oversight of Automated Decision-Making in Government Act – S.7543-B (Gonzalez) / A.9430-B (Otis):** This bill would require the disclosure of automated decision-making systems already in use, prohibit the unauthorized use of automated decision-making systems by state agencies or entities on behalf of an agency without meaningful human review and, when authorized, require the publication of an impact assessment – **Passed both houses.**
- **Workplace Bullying – S.3065-B (Ramos) / A.8934-A (Bronson):** This legislation amends the labor law to expand the current duties of public employers to develop and implement programs to prevent workplace violence – **Passed both houses.**
- **FOIL Disclosure for Public Employees – S.5500-B (Skoufis) / A.6146-B (Buttenschon):** This legislation amends the Public Officers Law to require state agencies to inform public employees when a FOIL request has been made for their disciplinary records – **Passed both houses.**
- **SUNY Foundations Transparency – S.6863 (Stavisky) / A.9570 (Hyndman):** This legislation requires SUNY to produce an annual report to be published online which would disclose their financial records, including vendors, employees and general accounting information for SUNY foundations (Research & campus foundations) – **Passed the Senate but failed to pass in the Assembly.**
- **Surplus State Property – S.6431 (Cooney) / A.6494 (Fahy):** This legislation would allow for unused/unsold state property to be donated to non-profits – **Passed the Assembly but failed to pass in the Senate.**

- **SUNY Board of Trustees Appointment Reform – S.8645 (Skoufis) / A.6430A (Wallace):** This bill amends the education law to provide the Temporary President of the Senate and the Speaker of the Assembly the authority to appointment four members each to SUNY’s Board of Trustees – **Failed to pass either house.**

Legislation UUP Opposed:

- **SUNY Land-Lease Bills:** SUNY had three land-lease bills introduced in both houses of the legislature (Farmingdale, Stony Brook and Albany NanoTech) that UUP opposed due to the lack of adequate labor protection. UUP was successful in stopping the passage of the Farmingdale and Stony Brook bills. Unfortunately, the Albany NanoTech bill passed both houses. The Governor, however, has agreed to negotiate a chapter amendment with UUP to try and alleviate the union’s concerns regarding inadequate labor protections.