



University Student Senate
555 West 57th Street, 1420
New York, NY 10019
Tel: (646) 664-8844
Fax: (646) 664-8863

**Testimony of Nicole Agu
Vice-Chair for International Students and Immigrant Affairs,
University Student Senate (USS),
New York State Higher Education Hearing**

My name is Nicole Agu and I am an international student at the College of Staten Island in the City University of New York. I am studying dual majors in Accounting and International Business and minoring in Finance and Business Data Analytics. I currently serve as a Student Government Senator, Club Commissioner, and University Student Senate Delegate on my CUNY campus. In addition, I serve as the Vice-Chair for International Students and Immigrant Affairs at the University Student Senate in CUNY. I want to appreciate every senator for holding this hearing to listen to student's testimony about how urgent it is that you should consider funding CUNY entirely.

EVERYONE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR STATUS DESERVES AN AFFORDABLE COLLEGE

EDUCATION

Higher education is an investment that is often overlooked. New York State should push forward to implement an affordable education for all students in CUNY and SUNY.

CUNY holds itself to the standard of making education affordable and accessible, but that standard fails every year with tuition hikes. A fully funded CUNY will eliminate any threats to opportunity programs, such as ASAP, SEEK, Single Stop, etc that help students to succeed in college. A fully funded CUNY will provide more scholarship opportunities for international students who are not eligible for TAP or financial aid.



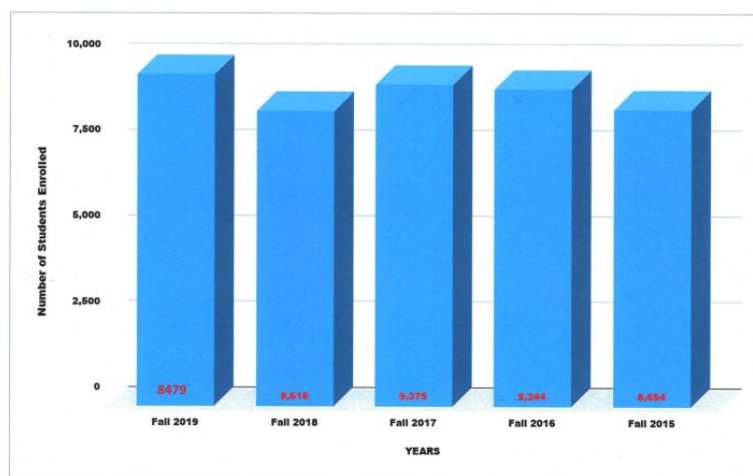
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The yearly tuition hikes affect the financial capacity of every student, especially those who pay out-of-state tuition rates because they are charged per credit as full-time students.

Why is there an increase in tuition but resources and opportunities for students are stagnant?

What is the ethical point of increasing tuition and making students suffer financially when CUNY still has understaffed departments, poorly funded opportunity programs, lower accessibility to evening and weekend classes, appalling campus infrastructures, low feminine hygiene resources, food, and housing insecurities, and the list goes on? Full-time students who pay out of state tuition rate cannot afford to take more than 16 credits in a semester because they will be charged more than \$10,000 in a semester. Currently, tuition rate is \$620 per credit for senior colleges and \$320 for community colleges. This rate also affects the enrollment of international students in CUNY. Within five years, CUNY enrollment for international students have decreased as illustrated in the charts;

CUNY F1 International Students 5-Year Enrollment Trend – Fall 2019



Source: SEVIS- Student Exchange & Visitor Information System



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Out-of-state students also deserve an affordable education. It is only right to fully fund CUNY because of the benefits that will be obtained by many students.