

Testimony

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The Value of Higher Education in New York State

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Joint Budget Hearing on Higher Education
Hamilton Hearing Room B, 2nd Floor
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Introduction

Good afternoon and thank you for allowing me to testify at this hearing today. I am Laura Anglin, President of the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities, representing more than 100 private, not-for-profit colleges and universities located here in New York State.

You each have a copy of our state fiscal year 2013-14 Independent Sector Legislative Priorities brochure.

At its heart New York's Independent Sector of higher education is about students. Investing in New York's students is investing in New York's future. We appreciate the support the Legislature has provided over the years for student aid programs.

The Independent Sector

Now I will share a few highlights of our sector. New York's private, not-for-profit colleges and universities provide nearly 486,000 students—38% of students enrolled in

New York—with a range of higher education options, from large research universities to more than 80 colleges that enroll fewer than 2,000 students. The Independent Sector is committed to providing access and ensuring degree completion. Thirty-eight percent of Black undergraduate students and 39% of Hispanic undergraduate students enroll at four-year independent colleges and universities. Further, one in three New Yorkers (27%) enrolled full-time at an independent college comes from a family that earns less than \$40,000 annually, and one in nine have a family income below \$20,000 (11%).

The Value of Higher Education to New York’s Students

Higher education is still one of the best investments an individual can make. Students with bachelor’s degrees can expect to earn \$1 million more in their lifetime than high school graduates, have lower unemployment, and receive better benefits.

Tuition Assistance Program and Bundy Aid

You help make this happen with your strong commitment to the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). Currently, nearly 90,000 resident students depend on TAP to attend an independent college or university in New York State. Additionally, Direct Institutional “Bundy” Aid supplements institutional aid and helps independent institutions offer financial assistance so that students can realize their best fit.

Opportunity Programs—HEOP, C-STEP, STEP, LPP

New York’s opportunity programs are models for the country and have a proven effect on the number of minority, low-income, and first-generation students who are

prepared for and complete their degrees. But, more needs to be done. The gap in national degree attainment rates is substantial—only 11% of low-income individuals obtain a bachelor's degree, compared to 79% of high-income individuals. **The Arthur O. Eve Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP)** addresses this disparity by providing more than 4,600 students with support services and financial aid, helping them graduate at rates above the national average for all students. More than simply a student aid program, HEOP is a community with a built-in support system, and its student participants are quick to credit their success to HEOP. *Donette Ritchie, from Brooklyn told us "HEOP helped fund my college education, enhanced my professional network, and created a home away from home where I can go to laugh, cry and study. If this wonderful program were non-existent; I would have been struggling with a minimum wage job."* *Thomas Waters from Corona, NY, also notes that HEOP is about more than simply academics. "From the academic skills course taught in the pre-freshmen summer program to the excellent subject tutors specifically selected during the regular semesters, each afforded the tools to be academically prepared. Even more, the emphasis on community service instilled a "pay it forward" mentality that drove me to volunteer as much as possible."*

The demand for this successful program continues to grow, and we estimate only about 10% of eligible students are served. We appreciate the Legislature's support last year in restoring funds for HEOP. If available, additional funds would help meet the increasing demand and lessen the achievement gap along income lines.

The Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (C-STEP) and its high school counterpart, **STEP**, receive valuable state funds to increase the number of minorities

in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematic (STEM) fields. In the Independent Sector alone 18 STEP and 18 C-STEP programs serve nearly 4,700 students.

Finally, the successful **Liberty Partnerships Program** supports at-risk students with services that improve their ability to complete high school and advance into higher education and the workforce. The program sends approximately 1,500 high schools graduates to college or the workforce each year.

The Value of Higher Education to New York's Local and State Economies

Colleges and universities are also economic drivers, providing local economies with jobs and economic activity. In 2011, New York's Independent Sector contributed a total of \$63.2 billion to the state's economy, an increase of 16.4% over 2009. The Independent Sector is a major employer, employing 373,000 direct and indirectly. Even in the Great Recession, the higher education sector experienced growth that had a stabilizing effect on communities, especially in Upstate New York.

Greening and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Initiative

To further local development, the State should partner with the Independent Sector to develop a Greening and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) program to help improve energy efficiency, sustainability and reduce our carbon footprint. Working with the Dormitory Authority (DASNY), we propose that the State enact a capital matching grant program to finance projects at public and private colleges and universities that promote energy efficiency or enhance STEM education. We also ask that the Legislature support the Executive Budget language extending deadlines in the original

Higher Education Capital Matching Grants Program (HE Cap) statute, including the provision to allocate approximately \$7 million in unused funds in a second “recycle” round.

KnowledgeNY.org

To capitalize on the resources available at New York's colleges and universities, CUC and SUNY have created Knowledge New York, an online search tool that gives businesses access to expertise, resources, and events at college and university campuses. This pilot project ties in well with the priorities of the Regional Economic Development Councils and the Governor's proposed Innovation Agenda. Now that the site has been built, we believe this would be a great tool for the state so the state should consider taking ownership of the site and expand it to include CUNY and more SUNY and independent sector campuses.

Leverage College and University Research Partnerships

The Executive Budget outlines a plan to expand New York's Innovation economy by increasing technology transfer and funding early-stage research. Proposed initiatives like “Innovation Hot Spots,” a new venture capital fund, and the Innovation NY network will help support research and development at colleges and universities and ensure that new ideas reach the marketplace. The state should also reinstate the proven Faculty Development Program and the Technology Transfer Incentive Program to retain talented researchers and promote commercialization.

The Value of Higher Education to New York’s Businesses

Higher Education provides business with the trained workers they need and in turn these trained workers help attract new businesses.

Provide Incentives to keep college graduates in New York State

To avoid the loss of talent—the “brain drain”—in New York, the state should incentivize employers to develop co-op and internship programs to help students find employment and remain in New York after graduation. To do this, the state could provide tax credits to businesses that develop partnerships with colleges, offer loan forgiveness to graduates that take jobs in New York, or support career offices.

The Value of Higher Education to New York’s Communities

Finally, colleges and universities address local challenges through partnerships with their communities, and consider this service to be an important part of their mission. They pass this value of service to their students, as well, and studies show that college students volunteer more than their peers.

To leverage this capacity of colleges and universities to make New York stronger, the Independent Sector is ready to partner with the state on initiatives outlined in the Executive Budget, including Community Schools; the Regional Economic Development Council Opportunity Agenda; Community, Opportunity, Reinvestment “CORe” Neighborhoods; and the Statewide Volunteer Network. Many of these programs dovetail nicely with the Independent Sector’s Community Solutions initiative.

Conclusion

In closing, we are very pleased that the Governor's proposed budget supports higher education. I would like to thank the Legislature for your steadfast support for students, TAP and Opportunity Programs that help them achieve their dreams. I look forward to working with you this year, and I am happy to answer any questions.

