



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Darrel J. Aubertine

Aubertine: SUNY Raises Send Wrong Message

DARREL J. AUBERTINE September 16, 2010

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Efforts to save money should not be undone by hiking pay to well compensated administrators

WATERTOWN (September 16, 2010)—State Sen. Darrel J. Aubertine today said that he is concerned about reports of raises exceeding 10 percent going to high level State University of New York administrators in Albany at a time when rank and file SUNY employees are taking furloughs to keep costs down and maintain SUNY's quality educational programs.

"Raises at this time, especially of this magnitude, for top administrators who are already well compensated by the SUNY system show a lack of understanding of the financial strain this state and our SUNY system are under," Sen. Aubertine said. "It's unacceptable to have rank and file employees take an involuntary furlough to help cut costs so we can continue offering a quality education at our SUNY schools in these tough times, and then essentially put that money into the pockets of top administrators."

The Albany Times Union today reported that three top officers of the **State University of New York's** central administration on Wednesday received \$30,000 pay raises and other benefits. The raises are between 10.5 and 13.6 percent, and two leaders received monthly housing bonuses of \$3,250 and \$5,000, respectively, the newspaper reported. These raises bring the annual pay for these administrators to \$275,937 plus \$39,000 for housing, \$315,000 plus \$60,000 for housing, and \$250,000, the newspaper reported.

The raises come as the chancellor is heralding \$3.5 million in cost savings and "future cost avoidance," according to the board's resolutions, by "designing a leadership structure that responds to budget challenges facing" SUNY, while also starting a multimillion-dollar renovation program to fix up the fourth floor of SUNY headquarters for SUNY executives, the newspaper reported. About 221 management-confidential employees at SUNY headquarters are involuntarily forfeiting at least a day's pay each month under a furlough program, which started in July, the newspaper reported.

"These raises and remodeling projects send a bad message," Sen. Aubertine said. "Rather than remodeling Albany administration offices, we should be looking at the infrastructure on our campuses, which would benefit the students. This state must look closer at the top heavy administrations in many agencies and departments, and not pass the burden of funding cuts and difficult financial times down to the rank and file employees who directly provide services. We need to balance the need to keep top talent on board with the

need to wisely spend each and every penny from taxpayers and in the case of SUNY, provide tangible benefits to the students who pay tuition.”

Sen. Aubertine is a member of the bipartisan Senate Task Force on Government Efficiency, which has been taking a closer look at the expenses of agencies, departments and authorities to identify waste and help the state run more efficiently. Additionally, the Senator has sponsored legislation to implement performance based budgeting, which would require agency and department budgets to reflect actual spending and budget needs for funding and reward departments that cut spending.