

## *Aid Drops As Enrollment Rises*

# PSC: Report Shows Folly Of Further Cuts at CUNY

By DAVID SIMS

The Professional Staff Congress has cited a new report that charges the state with underfunding higher education to rebut City University of New York Chancellor Matthew Goldstein's claim to the State Legislature that CUNY could weather proposed aid cuts through a tuition increase.

The Fiscal Policy Institute released a report Jan. 15 showing that "even before the mid-year cuts in the 2008-2009 state budget," state aid to four-year colleges in the State University of New York had fallen by 5 percent since the early 1990s, with CUNY support falling by 14 percent. Community colleges lost aid even more rapidly, with a 12-percent drop at SUNY and a 26-percent drop at CUNY.

### 'Not Smart Economic Strategy'

"Next year's classes at SUNY and CUNY are expected to be larger than ever," said David Dyssegaard Kallick, a senior fellow at the FPI. "Yet, rather than expand funding to an already overstressed system, the state budget proposal recommends a decrease in support for public higher education. That's not a smart economic strategy, and it's not good stewardship of two of the country's great systems of public higher education."

In a statement, PSC President Barbara Bowen said that the report "quantifies what CUNY faculty and staff have been living for years," and warned that "New York can't keep underinvesting in CUNY and expect the University to survive unscathed."

### Bigger Tuition Slice to CUNY

Mr. Goldstein, in his testimony on CUNY's proposed 2009-2010 state budget, said that the budget gaps the university faced would be met by state-mandated tuition increases of 15 percent for undergraduate students. "For the first time in state history, the budget calls for 20 percent of the tuition revenue increase to be retained by the University for investment in core activities, increasing to

50 percent as state fiscal conditions improve," said Mr. Goldstein. "We are deeply grateful for the leadership exhibited by the Governor and the Division of Budget in presenting this plan, which moves toward the investment called for by the compact model."

The "compact" model is Mr. Gold-

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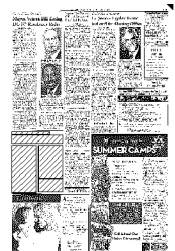
stein's proposal for the future fiscal security of CUNY, relying on "productivity and efficiency measures" in the university as well as increased donations and tuition increases, as state funding will decrease by \$65 million this year.

Ms. Bowen has slammed the idea of closing the state's budget deficit by increasing tuition, saying, "This is a revenue crisis. The Legislature must enact progressive revenue options to solve the crisis, not ask our students to pay more and our members to do more with less." The PSC estimates that 80 percent of CUNY graduates stay in the city and contribute \$15 billion a year to the local economy, and recommends further aggressive investment in the system to combat fiscal problems.

### Broad Endorsement

The report broadly endorses these recommendations, saying, "It is hard to see how institutions of higher education can do more by spending less—enrollment is already up without corresponding funding increases, too few classes are taught by full-time professors, and it's hard to see where any "fat" could be found to cut at institutions that have been under-funded for many years." It counsels that "state funding for higher education is an important way to help families through the current crisis, to spur growth in the local economy, to narrow racial gaps in income and education, and to help build a solid middle class for New York's future."

The report mentions the possibility of Federal funding through the stimulus package from Washington, something Governor Paterson has been seeking, especially for education. It also notes that the number of New



York City's workers with associate or bachelor's degrees has risen to 47 percent, almost 10 points higher than in 1990, highlighting the importance of higher education to the city.

"No one is more pleased than our members that so many New Yorkers want to come to CUNY," said Ms. Bowen. "But the state cannot simply cram more students into overcrowded classrooms and expect great education to result. Without an increased investment, education will suffer. The FPI report is clear: New York didn't invest when times were good, and now must invest in CUNY with public dollars—not tuition hikes."

