



OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER

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SUNY Tuition: Low Out-of-State Tuition Results in Millions of Dollars in Lost Revenue

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Summary

The State University of New York (SUNY) system represents an excellent value to its many students, regardless of resident status. The State-operated system enrolls well over 400,000 students at its 64 campuses, of which 13 are university centers, 21 are colleges and 30 are community colleges. Tuition dollars combined with State and county revenues support the \$10.7 billion SUNY budget.

Public universities, such as SUNY's 34 State-operated campuses, typically charge resident students a lower rate of tuition than students who come from out of state to reflect the fact that resident students and their parents support the state schools through taxes. However, increases in undergraduate tuition for SUNY students from out of state have not kept pace with increases in resident tuition over the years. In fact, SUNY's out-of-state tuition at its colleges and universities is among the lowest in the nation.

In comparison with 29 other public schools in 19 states, SUNY out-of-state tuition, which is set to \$12,870 for the 2009-10 school year, is \$8,463 less than the average out-of-state tuition (\$21,333) for these schools. If the amount charged for tuition to out-of-state students is increased to match the national average for these comparable schools over a four year period, SUNY could earn additional revenues of approximately \$340 million when fully implemented.

Introduction

The State University of New York (SUNY) enrolls 162,719 full-time equivalent (FTE) undergraduate students at 34 State-operated campuses across New York.¹ State-

¹ State University of New York. 153,441 full-time students and 9,279 full-time equivalents from part-time students (139,178 part-time undergraduate credit hours divided by 15 credit hours) from the 13 university centers and 21 colleges. Fall 2008 data.

operated university centers and colleges from Buffalo to Stony Brook offer some of the best college programs in the nation in terms of cost and quality. The excellence of the system is reflected by the fact that nearly 10 percent of SUNY undergraduate students come from out of state. About 6 percent or 9,429 SUNY student FTEs reside in other states and 4 percent or 6,626 SUNY students are from another country, for a total of 16,055 students who do not reside in New York State.² While SUNY and New York State benefit from the diversity of these nonresident students, the out-of-state tuition cost is significantly below that charged by similar public universities around the country.

In the 2002-03 school year, out-of-state SUNY undergraduate tuition and fees ranked 28th highest in the nation at \$9,115.³ Just three years later, in school year 2005-06, SUNY out-of-state tuition and fees ranked 44th highest in the nation at \$12,328, with only six other states having a lower public university out-of-state tuition cost.⁴ In those same years, the resident SUNY tuition cost ranked 22nd (\$4,014) and 28th (\$5,031), respectively.⁵ Despite a \$2,260 increase for the 2009-10 school year, SUNY undergraduate out-of-state tuition is still \$8,463 less than the average out-of-state tuition (\$21,333) for 29 public schools examined from 19 other states.

Over the past 19 years, SUNY resident and out-of-state undergraduate tuition have both increased several times. However, not only have increases to resident tuition not kept pace with out-of-state increases, but the resident tuition increases have been at a much higher rate than out-of-state tuition increases. For example, from the 1990-91 school year through the 2009-10 school year, resident tuition has increased 231 percent, from \$1,500 in 1990-91 to \$4,970 in 2009-10. In contrast, out-of-state tuition has grown just 165 percent during that period, from \$4,850 to \$12,870.⁶

In November 2008, SUNY adopted a “Rational Tuition Plan” that established an annual increase for in-state tuition to be based on an inflationary index, the Higher Education Pricing Index (HEPI). However, SUNY did not adopt a similar plan for out-of-state tuition. Instead, SUNY increased out-of-state tuition by \$2,260 for the 2009-10 school year, without provisions for future increases. SUNY increased in-state tuition by \$620 in the 2009-10 school year and plans to increase in-state tuition each year based on the HEPI. As a result, New York’s college students will continue to shoulder an unfair burden of tuition increases, in effect subsidizing the cost of nonresident students to attend SUNY.

² State University of New York. 9,239 full-time Other U.S. students and 190 Other U.S. FTEs (2,857 part-time undergraduate credit hours divided by 15 credit hours) and 6,176 full-time international students and 450 international FTEs (6,754 part-time undergraduate credit hours divided by 15 credit hours). Fall 2008 data.

³ CQ’s *State Fact Finder 2004*. Hovey, Kendra A. and Harold A. Hovey. CQ Press, Washington, DC (2004) p.227.

⁴ CQ’s *State Fact Finder 2007*. Hovey, Kendra A. and Harold A. Hovey. CQ Press, Washington, DC (2007). p. 227. The six states with out-of-state tuition and fees lower than New York were Oklahoma, Alaska, Hawaii, South Dakota, Wyoming and Mississippi.

⁵ CQ’s *State Fact Finder 2004*. Hovey, Kendra A. and Harold. A. Hovey. CQ Press, Washington DC (2004) p. 226. CQ’s *State Fact Finder 2007*. Hovey, Kendra A. and Harold A. Hovey. CQ Press, Washington, DC (2007). P. 226 (most current available).

⁶ State University of New York System Administration, Office of Institutional Research.

Comparison to Other States

While no two higher education institutions are exactly alike, some common factors are sought by students and parents in selecting a college or university. Among these are the likelihood of the student obtaining admission, specific programs offered by the institution, the number of students enrolled and the cost.

The admission competitiveness of schools can be utilized to show how the out-of-state undergraduate tuition in SUNY State-operated campuses compares to other states. In the annual publication, *PROFILES OF AMERICAN COLLEGES 2009*, 28TH edition colleges and universities across the country are evaluated through an assessment of their competitiveness for admission. Barron's identifies a total of seven different levels of admission competitiveness – Most Competitive, Highly Competitive, Very Competitive, Competitive, Less Competitive, Noncompetitive and Special.⁷

Of the 34 State-operated SUNY campuses, 24 have been rated by Barron's, 23 were included within the Highly Competitive, Very Competitive or Competitive classifications and 1 was designated as Special.⁸ Within the Highly Competitive, Very Competitive and Competitive ratings, Barron's has an additional "+" designation for schools within the category that accept students with higher SAT or ACT scores and accept a lower percentage of applicants, thus making them somewhat more competitive.

This analysis compared the 2009-10 school year out-of-state undergraduate tuition for 20 SUNY schools with competitive rankings to 29 public universities and colleges in 19 other states within the same ranking according to Barron's. The schools in other states were judgmentally selected in an attempt to identify somewhat similar schools, but with the recognition that no two schools are alike. Each ranking contains four or five other schools. For comparative purposes, this analysis also included the number of full-time undergraduate students for each school.

This simple analysis found that SUNY's 2009-10 out-of-state tuition was lower than all 29 other schools (see Appendix A for full list). Further, the difference between SUNY out-of-state tuition and the average out-of-state tuition for the schools in other states in each grouping ranged from \$4,416 more than SUNY for "Competitive +" schools to \$10,241 more than SUNY for schools in the "Highly Competitive" category as shown in the table on the following page. The average out-of-state undergraduate tuition for all 29 other state schools reviewed was \$21,333, \$8,463 more than the SUNY cost of \$12,870.

⁷ *PROFILES OF AMERICAN COLLEGES 2009*, 28TH edition. Copyright (c) 2008 by Barron's Educational Series, Inc. Reprinted by arrangement with Barron's Educational Series, Inc., Hauppauge, NY, pages 247-258.

⁸ *PROFILES OF AMERICAN COLLEGES 2009*, 28TH edition. Copyright (c) 2008 by Barron's Educational Series, Inc. Reprinted by arrangement with Barron's Educational Series, Inc., Hauppauge, NY. The school with "Special" admission rating was Empire State College.

**2009-10 Undergraduate Out-of-State Tuition by Admission Competitiveness
SUNY vs. the Average of Other State Schools Reviewed**

Admission Qualification	SUNY	Average Other State	Difference
Competitive	\$12,870	\$19,832	\$6,962
Competitive +	\$12,870	\$19,074	\$6,204
Very Competitive	\$12,870	\$23,094	\$10,224
Very Competitive +	\$12,870	\$21,086	\$8,216
Highly Competitive	\$12,870	\$23,111	\$10,241
Highly Competitive +	\$12,870	\$21,918	\$9,048
Overall Average	\$12,870	\$21,333	\$8,463

As a conservative illustration of the potential additional revenue that could result from an improved pricing of SUNY undergraduate out-of-state tuition to match other schools, an increase of \$8,463 phased in over four years, which would bring SUNY tuition up to the average found in the comparison above (\$21,333), could raise approximately \$340 million when fully implemented. Further, if half of these new funds raised during the phase-in were used to either provide a rebate or temporary deferral of tuition increases for current resident students over the four year period, each resident undergraduate student FTE would save a total of approximately \$1,000.

Appendix A

Public Four Year Universities and Colleges				
Undergraduate 2009-10 Out-of-State Tuition by Admission Qualification				
(Sources: <i>PROFILES OF AMERICAN COLLEGES</i> 2009, Individual University Websites and State University of New York)				
Undergraduate Admission Qualification / Name of School	SUNY Out-of-State Tuition	Other State Out-of-State Tuition	Difference	Full-Time Enrollment
Highly Competitive +				
SUNY Binghamton	\$12,870			11,368
SUNY Geneseo	\$12,870			5,449
Ramapo College of New Jersey (Mahwah, NJ)		\$15,366		4,795
University of Connecticut (Storrs, CT)		\$23,232		15,300
University of Illinois (Urbana, IL)		\$26,802		30,205
University of Wisconsin (Madison, WI)		\$22,270		27,879
Average	\$12,870	\$21,918	\$9,048	
Highly Competitive				
SUNY Stony Brook	\$12,870			14,737
Clemson University (Clemson, SC)		\$25,788		13,070
Ohio State University (Columbus, OH)		\$22,278		33,800
Rutgers (Piscataway, NJ)		\$20,456		24,878
University of Maryland (College Park, MD)		\$23,990		23,780
University of Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh, PA)		\$23,042		15,662
Average	\$12,870	\$23,111	\$10,241	
Very Competitive +				
SUNY Buffalo	\$12,870			17,780
Indiana State University (Bloomington, IN)		\$26,160		28,790
Rowan University (Glassboro, NJ)		\$18,308		6,800
University of Delaware (Newark, DE)		\$22,240		14,519
University of South Carolina (Columbia, SC)		\$23,332		17,247
University of South Florida (Tampa, FL)		\$15,390		24,600
Average	\$12,870	\$21,086	\$8,216	

Undergraduate Admission Qualification / Name of School	NYS Out- of-State Tuition	Other State Out-of-State Tuition	Difference	Full Time Enrollment
<u>Very Competitive</u>				
SUNY Brockport	\$12,870			6,294
SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry	\$12,870			1,501
SUNY Fredonia	\$12,870			5,038
SUNY New Paltz	\$12,870			5,750
SUNY Oneonta	\$12,870			5,428
SUNY Oswego	\$12,870			5,325
SUNY Purchase	\$12,870			3,661
College of Charleston (Charleston, SC)		\$21,846		8,964
University of Michigan (Dearborn, MI)		\$23,930		4,234
University of New Hampshire (Durham, NH)		\$24,050		11,467
University of North Carolina (Asheville, NC)		\$16,078		2,942
University of Vermont (Burlington, VT)		\$29,568		9,299
Average	\$12,870	\$23,094	\$10,224	
<u>Competitive +</u>				
Buffalo State College	\$12,870			8,259
SUNY Old Westbury	\$12,870			2,880
Evergreen State College (Olympia, WA)		\$16,428		3,802
University of Cincinnati (Cincinnati, OH)		\$23,922		16,907
University of Massachusetts (Amherst, MA)		\$21,130		17,885
University of Pittsburg (Bradford, PA)		\$20,572		1,192
William Paterson University (Wayne, NJ)		\$13,320		7,480
Average	\$12,870	\$19,074	\$6,204	

Undergraduate Admission Qualification / Name of School	NYS Out- of-State Tuition	Other State Out-of-State Tuition	Difference	Full Time Enrollment
<u>Competitive</u>				
SUNY Albany	\$12,870			12,391
SUNY Alfred	\$12,870			3,583
SUNY Cobleskill	\$12,870			2,486
SUNY Cortland	\$12,870			5,972
SUNY Farmingdale	\$12,870			4,878
SUNY Plattsburgh	\$12,870			5,325
SUNY Potsdam	\$12,870			3,492
Central Connecticut State University (New Britain, CT)		\$17,106		7,658
Keene State College (Keene, NH)		\$15,170		4,478
Penn State University (Altoona, PA)		\$18,270		3,751
University of Maine (Orono, ME)		\$23,876		7,892
University of Rhode Island (Kingston, RI)		\$24,736		10,794
Average	\$12,870	\$19,832	\$6,962	
Avg SUNY Out-of-State Tuition	\$12,870			
Avg Other State Out-of-State Tuition	\$21,333			
Difference	\$8,463			

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