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**THE COUNCIL**

**COMMITTEE REPORT OF THE HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION**

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**COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

Hon. Inez D. Barron, Chair

**March 21, 2016**

**Proposed Res. No. 732-A:**

By Council Members Barron, Miller, Chin, Dickens, Gentile, Johnson, Mendez, Wills, Rose, Cabrera, Lander and Dromm.

**Title:**

Resolution calling upon the Governor and the State Legislature to increase State funding to the City University of New York and to reach a fair labor agreement with the University's faculty and staff in the 2016-17 New York State Executive Budget.

## **Introduction**

On Monday, March 21, 2016, the Committee on Higher Education, chaired by Council Member Inez D. Barron, will convene for a hearing of Resolution No. 732-A, calling upon the Governor and the State Legislature to increase State funding to the City University of New York and to reach a fair labor agreement with the University's faculty and staff in the 2016-17 New York State Executive Budget.

## **Resolution No. 732-A**

The resolution would note that the City University of New York (CUNY) is the public university system of New York City, serving more than 269,000 degree-credit students and 247,000 adult, continuing education and professional education students at 24 campuses across the five boroughs. The resolution would also note that CUNY has a legislatively mandated mission to be "of vital importance as a vehicle for the upward mobility of the disadvantaged in the City of New York... ensuring equal access and opportunity" to students, faculty and staff "from all ethnic and racial groups." Further, the resolution would affirm that CUNY makes higher education possible for a diverse and underprivileged student body, where 76 percent of undergraduates belong to racial and minority groups, 38 percent are immigrants and 39 percent have an annual household income of \$20,000 or less.

The resolution would note that the State has been CUNY's single greatest funder for decades, providing 46 percent of the University's fiscal year 2014 operating budget while tuition revenue financed 44 percent and the city financed the remaining 10 percent. The resolution would also note that the State's proposed Executive Budget would require the city to assume a 30 percent share of CUNY senior college net operating and debt service expenses, totaling \$485 million in the 2016-17 fiscal year.

The resolution would note that the Executive Budget also proposes to raise tuition by \$300 per year for five years. The resolution would also note that since 2008, per-student investment in CUNY has decreased by 14 percent. The resolution would further note that tuition paid by CUNY students has increased by approximately 30.4 percent from fall 2011 to spring 2016 so that it now covers almost 50 percent of the University's budget, compared to less than 40 percent prior to the 2008 recession.

The resolution would state that CUNY faculty and professional staff have been working under an expired contract since 2010 and employees no longer eligible for step increases in salary under the expired contract have gone without raises for six years. The resolution would assert that reduction in the State's financial commitment to CUNY would burden New York City with new and unexpected costs, diminish the quality of education at CUNY and destabilize the long term funding of the University, one of New York's most effective economic engines and a path to the middle class for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. The resolution would further assert that CUNY employees deserve recognition for their hard work and dedication and it is in the public interest to maintain accessibility to high quality higher education for all of the city's residents.

In conclusion, this resolution would call upon the Governor and the State Legislature to increase State funding to the City University of New York and to reach a fair labor agreement with the University's faculty and staff in the 2016-17 New York State Executive Budget.



Proposed Res. No. 732-A

Resolution calling upon the Governor and the State Legislature to increase State funding to the City University of New York and to reach a fair labor agreement with the University's faculty and staff in the 2016-17 New York State Executive Budget

By Council Members Barron, Miller, Chin, Dickens, Gentile, Johnson, Mendez, Wills, Rose, Cabrera, Lander and Dromm

Whereas, The City University of New York (CUNY) is the public university system of New York City, serving more than 269,000 degree-credit students and 247,000 adult, continuing education and professional education students at 24 campuses across the five boroughs; and

Whereas, CUNY has a legislatively mandated mission to be “of vital importance as a vehicle for the upward mobility of the disadvantaged in the City of New York... ensuring equal access and opportunity” to students, faculty and staff “from all ethnic and racial groups”; and

Whereas, CUNY makes higher education possible for a diverse and underprivileged student body, where 76 percent of undergraduates belong to racial and minority groups, 38 percent are immigrants and 39 percent have an annual household income of \$20,000 or less; and

Whereas, The State has been CUNY's single greatest funder for decades, providing 46 percent of the University's fiscal year 2014 operating budget while tuition revenue financed 44 percent and the city financed the remaining 10 percent; and

Whereas, The State's proposed Executive Budget would require the city to assume a 30 percent share of CUNY senior college net operating and debt service expenses, totaling \$485 million in the 2016-17 fiscal year; and

Whereas, The Executive Budget also proposes to raise tuition by \$300 per year for five years; and

Whereas, Since 2008, per-student investment in CUNY has decreased by 14 percent; and

Whereas, Tuition paid by CUNY students has increased by approximately 30.4 percent from fall 2011 to spring 2016 so that it now covers almost 50 percent of the University's budget, compared to less than 40 percent prior to the 2008 recession; and

Whereas, CUNY faculty and professional staff have been working under an expired contract since 2010 and employees no longer eligible for step increases in salary under the expired contract have gone without raises for six years; and

Whereas, A reduction in the State's financial commitment to CUNY would burden New York City with new and unexpected costs, diminish the quality of education at CUNY and destabilize the long term funding of the University, one of New York's most effective economic engines and a path to the middle class for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers; and

Whereas, CUNY employees deserve recognition for their hard work and dedication and it is in the public interest to maintain accessibility to high quality higher education for all of the city's residents; now therefore, be it

Resolved, That the City Council of New York calls upon the Governor and the State Legislature to increase State funding to the City University of New York and to reach a fair labor agreement with the University's faculty and staff in the 2016-17 New York State Executive Budget.

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CGR