

March 24, 2011

Dear

I am writing on behalf of the Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce and the Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier. Our organizations represent 1,200 businesses that employ over 24,000 working citizens in Chautauqua County. We are writing in support of a 5-year tuition plan for SUNY. We fully understand this year's proposed 10% reduction in SUNY's state funding has been necessitated by the state fiscal crisis, and for the past three years SUNY endured extraordinary cuts in order to do their part to assist the state during these difficult times. We are not asking for a restoration of the cuts, but rather for your assistance through legislation to ensure students continue to have access to classes so that they can graduate on time.

There are two key components to the 5-year tuition plan for SUNY:

- **Five-Year Tuition Plan.** SUNY has proposed a 5-year plan whereby the legislature would establish a "cap" on annual tuition increases, and the SUNY Board of Trustees would establish the annual increase within the confines of the cap, beginning Fall 2011. Boards routinely set tuition in 45 states, and about half have annual "caps," which can only be exceeded under exceptional budget circumstances with prior approval by the legislature and the Governor. The "caps" established by other states range from a low of 7% (Oklahoma) to a high of 10% (California). These states, unless facing very difficult budget times as we are experiencing now, normally set tuition below the cap.
- **Maintenance of Effort.** Maintenance of effort involves two components: (1) a routine provision of state funding to cover incremental costs associated with any collective bargaining agreement negotiated by the Governor's Office of Employee Relations. Every other part of state government routinely receives these funds, and only SUNY has been the exception to this rule. And, (2) as exists for all other components of New York public higher education, mid-year cuts to SUNY state-operated campuses should only occur with concurrence of the legislature, and not be unilaterally imposed.

As the President/CEO of the Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce and the Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier, as a graduate of SUNY Fredonia, and as someone who has worked closely with SUNY Fredonia for many years, I can speak personally on the important role this campus plays in our community and region. SUNY Fredonia is a key component of our local and regional economy, having taken extraordinary steps to implement strategies that

directly support our local businesses in addition to supplying the workforce of the future. We are very proud of SUNY Fredonia and grateful to the strong leadership this organization provides our community. SUNY Fredonia has very high quality personnel who exhibit concern on a daily basis for the well-being of students. SUNY Fredonia, a campus which recently ranked as high as 7th in the nation among public universities among 4-year graduation rates, needs your support of a modest tuition increase to ensure that its students have access to the classes they need to graduate. It is important to establish a multiple-year tuition plan that allows SUNY campuses to serve their students.

We ask you to please support a 5-year tuition plan for SUNY and the maintenance of effort provisions identified in this letter and in the attached resolution.

We hope you share in our belief in the power of public higher education, and that you will support a tuition plan.

Sincerely,

Todd J. Trantum
President/CEO
Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce