

Resolution on a Tuition Freeze for 2017-18

(This resolution was adopted by the DSC Plenary at its October 21 2016 meeting)

WHEREAS, the Doctoral Students' Council (DSC) represents and advocates for over 3,500 students at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York in their roles as students, teachers, workers, family members, New Yorkers, activists, and academics; and

Plenary

WHEREAS, in June 2011, the New York State Legislature passed a law, subsequently signed by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, empowering the CUNY Board of Trustees "to increase the resident undergraduate rate of tuition by no more than three hundred (\$300) dollars per academic year" for five years ending in the 2015-16 academic year; and¹

Executive Committee

Steering Committee

WHEREAS, the law also includes a "maintenance of effort" provision requiring that the State support for the senior colleges not be less than the amount provided the previous fiscal year; and

Constitution and Bylaws

Grants

WHEREAS, on November 28, 2011, the CUNY Board of Trustees voted to increase tuition by \$300 per fiscal year (FY) ending in the FY16 (2015-2016 academic year); and

Health & Wellness

WHEREAS, the undergraduate rate of tuition at senior colleges during FY11, before the five year tuition increase plan, was \$4,830; and

Outreach

Student Services

WHEREAS, the undergraduate rate of tuition increased to \$5,130 in FY12; to \$5,430 in FY13; to \$5,730 in FY14; to \$6,030 in FY15; and was increased to \$6,330 in FY16; and²

USS Advisory Committee

WHEREAS, the five year increase in the undergraduate rate of tuition totaled to approximately a 30.4% increase from FY11 to FY16; and³

Advocate Advisory Board

WHEREAS, on November 28, 2011, the CUNY Board of Trustees also voted to increase tuition, by \$670 per fiscal year for full-time law school resident students; \$480/yr for full-time master's resident students; \$430/yr for full-time doctoral resident students ending in FY16; and

OpenCUNY Board

Governance Task Force

WHEREAS, the State has failed to cover the "increasing fixed costs, including those for health insurance and pensions, and contractually mandated annual incremental salary increases" as part of the "maintenance of effort" provision, resulting in a \$51 million budget gap in funding for mandatory costs; and⁴

WHEREAS, this budget gap will most likely be mitigated by students through additional tuition hikes; and

WHEREAS, New York State's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) has failed to keep up with the rising cost of undergraduate tuition with a current maximum award of \$5,135—\$1,195 less than the 2015-2016 undergraduate rate at CUNY senior colleges; and

¹ N.Y. Educ. Law § 6206(7)(a).

² CUNY, <<http://www.cuny.edu/admissions/tuition-fees.html>>.

³ Formula: $[(\$6,330 - \$4,830) / \$4,830] * 100$

⁴ CUNY. "Basic Financial Statements and Management's Discussion and Analysis." 14. Web. <<http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/bf/2014FinancialStatements.pdf>>.

⁵ CUNY. "2015-2016 State Enacted Budget Preliminary Analysis." Web. <<http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/bf/whats-new/FY2016StateEnactedBudgetAnalysis.pdf>>.

WHEREAS, the State has failed in March 2016 to pass the NY DREAM Act that would extend TAP to undocumented students; and

WHEREAS, the TAP program does not take into account the cost of living per county, nor other rising costs, like textbook prices, transportation fees, daily meals, and supplies; and

WHEREAS, the total cost of attending an institution of higher learning is more than just tuition fees; and⁶

WHEREAS, the cost of living in New York City has risen about 23% from 2009 to 2014; and

WHEREAS, in the 2015-2016 academic year, CUNY estimated that students living at home would spend approximately \$9,592 in books, transportation, and living expenses, while students not living at home would spend approximately \$20,295 on such expenses; and⁷

WHEREAS, the 2014 Student Experience Survey also indicated that 54% of all CUNY students live in households with a household income less than \$29,999, with 65% of community college students living in these households; and⁸

WHEREAS, 75% of students are of color, 42% are first generation college students, 38% were born outside the U.S. mainland, 15% are raising children, and 53% are working for pay; and⁹

WHEREAS, the rising tuition and expenses, stagnant financial aid assistance, insufficient state funding, and the prevalence of low-wage jobs undermine the affordability and stymies the accessibility to higher education and the advancement of a highly-educated and skilled workforce; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Doctoral Students' Council hereby expressly continues to reject any extension of the "Rational" Tuition Plan or increases in tuition; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Doctoral Students' Council calls for a continuation of the freeze on tuition increases at the current 2016-2017 rates; and, be it

FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Doctoral Students' Council demands the State Legislature and Governor Andrew M. Cuomo adequately fund the increasing mandatory cost within CUNY as part of the maintenance of effort.

⁶ "Uptown Top Ranking." The Economist. The Economist Newspaper, 02 Mar. 2015. Web. <<http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2015/03/daily-chart>>.

⁷ CUNY, <http://www.cuny.edu/admissions/tuition-fees.html>

⁸ The Office of Institutional Research And Assessment, The City University of New York. "2014 Student Experience Survey." 8.

⁹ Professional Staff Congress/CUNY, "Keep the Promise of CUNY", Spring 2015, <http://psc-cuny.org/sites/default/files/Lobbybook2015_FP.pdf> (citing 2014 CUNY Student Experience Survey; A Profile of Undergraduates at CUNY Senior and Community Colleges: Fall 2013, <http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/ira/ir/data-book/current/student/ug_student_profile_f13.pdf>).