

Resolution Against Tuition Increase 2015

Passed on October 23, 2015

WHEREAS, the Doctoral Students' Council represents and advocates for over 4,000 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 State University of New York (SUNY) and 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, and

Executive Committee

Steering Committee

Constitution and Bylaws

Grants

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

Health & Wellness

Outreach

WHEREAS, in November 2011, the CUNY Board of Trustees voted to increase tuition by \$300 for undergraduates and proportionally for graduate, doctoral, and non-resident students, per fiscal year (FY) ending in FY16 (2015-2016 academic year); and

Student Services

USS Advisory Committee

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

Advocate Advisory Board

OpenCUNY 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 per fiscal year for full-time master's residents students; \$430 per fiscal year for full-time doctoral resident students ending in the FY16 (2015-2016 academic year); and

Governance Task Force

EDLAB

WHEREAS, New York State's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) for graduate students, with a maximum award of \$550, was completely eliminated in 2009-2104; and

Student Tech Fee

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; and

WHEREAS, the current State budget leaves CUNY with \$63 million in unfunded mandatory costs and CUNY forecasts similar gaps "in 2016 and beyond," which represents the continual divestment of the state from public higher education, and

WHEREAS, the 2014 Student Experience Survey indicates 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; and

WHEREAS, 75% of CUNY students are people of color, 42% are first generation college students, 38% were born outside the U.S. Mainland, and 53% are working for pay, and therefore tuition increases disproportionately affect groups who historically have not had access to higher education; and

WHEREAS, CUNY's doctoral student workers and adjuncts, continue to labor without a contract or adequate pay, demonstrating the State's failure to protect the quality of education for all students; and

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

RESOLVED, that the Doctoral Students' Council of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York hereby expressly rejects any extension of the "Rational" Tuition Plan; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Doctoral Students' Council calls for a freeze on tuition increases; and be it

FINALL RESOLVED, that the Doctoral Students' Council calls on Governor Cuomo to sign the Maintenance of Effort bill passed by the State Legislature in July 2015 to fund the increasing mandatory costs within CUNY.