



**Marc J. Cohen**  
President and Trustee

State University Plaza  
Albany, New York 12246

Twitter @MarcCohenNY  
[www.sunysa.org/president](http://www.sunysa.org/president)

## **Student Assembly Offers Testimony Before Joint Budget Committee**

January 24, 2017 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Tyler McNeil, [tyler.mcneil@sunysa.org](mailto:tyler.mcneil@sunysa.org)

This morning, on behalf of his 600,000 student colleagues from across the state, SUNY Student Assembly President and SUNY Trustee Marc J. Cohen testified at the joint budget hearing before the Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means Committees.

President Cohen testified alongside SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher to convey one clear message: SUNY students need state support in order to succeed.

“We must strive for greater accessibility, increased affordability, and increasingly enriching educational experiences for our students, who are our greatest assets and the most worthwhile investment that can be made by New York State. Any investment in our students is a direct investment in New York’s workforce,” said Cohen.

Cohen continued on to say that the Student Assembly supports measures which prevent the burden of higher education from falling squarely on the shoulders of students and their families. “We are encouraged by the Governor’s Excelsior Scholarship program, which brings the critical issue of affordability into the spotlight and takes a much needed step toward reducing student debt and alleviating the financial strain on middle-income families of attaining a quality education.”

Cohen also emphasized that SUNY’s community colleges should not and cannot be overlooked in the budget cycle, and reaffirmed the Student Assembly’s support for expansion and increased funding for programs like TAP ([linked](#)) and EOP ([linked](#)), which have benefitted SUNY students for years.

Before answering questions from the panel, Cohen concluded, “In the coming months, I ask all the members of the New York State legislature and your committees in particular to be cognizant of and sensitive to the importance of strong state investment in higher education for the future of our state. Debt goes far beyond tuition, and it is vital that we work to promote the mission of SUNY: accessible, affordable, high quality education.”

### **About the SUNY Student Assembly**

The Student Assembly of the State University of New York (SUNY SA) is the recognized student government organization representing the nearly 600,000 students of the State University of New York. Comprised of student leaders elected by their peers from across SUNY’s 64 campuses, SUNY SA is committed to empowering students throughout the state, and ensuring the representation of its members on the state and national level, as well as throughout the SUNY system.

###