

Pursuing the Dream



*2008 State of the University Address
President Shirley Strum Kenny, Stony Brook University*



Pursuing the Dream

STATE OF THE
UNIVERSITY ADDRESS
PRESIDENT SHIRLEY STRUM KENNY
STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY
SEPTEMBER 24, 2008

Welcome to our annual Convocation. You who are sitting here today, you and our 24,000 remarkable students, are the heart of Stony Brook. From a very personal standpoint, I will say that I have never had the opportunity to work with such a talented group of teachers, researchers, and administrators anywhere. We have a mission; we know what that mission is; and I am moved every day by witnessing my colleagues giving of themselves for the dream of Stony Brook. All this despite the fact that Stony Brook has been poorly funded, at least in my time—I have heard stories of those heady early days when there was plenty of money and lots of empty land with which to pursue the dream.

Those days are gone. Now we are facing major cuts, the highest in our recent history. The difficulty of such cuts is more understandable when you realize that of our total All-Funds budget of \$1.8 billion, only \$300 million is what we call State Purpose money. That includes approximately \$200 million of tax levy money and \$100 million of tuition. Of that \$300 million, 82 percent is spent on personnel and 13 percent on utilities, leaving only 5 percent for everything else. Therefore it is imperative for us to fight for increased State Purpose funding in the future. If our present dire situation is a temporary—one-year—problem, we can handle it, though unquestionably with discomfort, by redirecting some of our funding intended for equipment, services, etc. We can delay filling open positions, or perhaps not fill them at all. We can, in effect, get by for a short time if we are then enabled to move ahead to meet those delayed needs.



Even though the state's contribution was only \$200 million this year, Stony Brook University's All-Funds budget has grown steadily, from \$650.5 million in 1993/94 to \$1.8 billion in 2008/09.

But if, as seems likely, the crisis extends over two or three years or more, untempered by infusions of funding to meet our needs, we have a very different situation. We desperately need to make the case that SUNY and CUNY are essential to the well-being of this state. They are not mere social gestures; they are not safety nets; they are economic and social bedrock. They are our hope for the future, our guarantee against losing our primacy as a state.

When Governor Nelson Rockefeller determined to establish a State University of New York in the 1940s, long after other states had created state universities, he was aware of its importance. The original system linked many private colleges together, and it was not shortchanged in State support. Stony Brook opened in September 1957 as a brand new Long Island teachers' college for science and math. When Sputnik was launched that October, Stony Brook's mission metamorphosed to that of a great research university. Originally funded appropriately for such a Herculean task—a new research university built from scratch—Stony Brook and indeed the entire University later hit on hard times. Remarkably, in just 50 years, we have risen to international eminence—this year we are ranked 127 of all universities worldwide in the London *Times Higher Education—QS World University Ranking*.

We are ranked 127 of all universities worldwide, according to the London *Times Higher Education—QS World University Ranking*.

I can take up the story best from 1994, when I first came here. Ironically enough, when I arrived, the campus had hit a financial crisis reminiscent of today. I discovered in our All-Funds budget both a debt and a growing fiscal deficit—for several years, Stony

Formed in 2006 with 17 students, the Stony Brook University Marching Band now has 110 members, a color guard, a dance team, and five tubas.



Brook had overspent its budget and each year increased the debt. We were therefore faced with the unpleasant task of recouping approximately \$10 million and cutting annual expenditures significantly. In those days our total State Purpose funding—tax levy and tuition—was \$170 million instead of today’s \$300 million, 57 percent of today’s budget.

We did it within three years through very prudent belt-tightening. After that, Stony Brook was able to grow remarkably stronger and bigger, although obviously our budgets have not burgeoned. The State has gotten incredible value at Stony Brook.

Since 1994, State Purpose funding—tax levy and tuition—has increased by only 76 percent, but the All-Funds operating budget, including research dollars, student room and board, the Hospital budget, etc., has almost tripled from \$650 million to \$1.8 billion. Research expenditures alone are now almost as high as the tax

levy support for the University—\$170 million as compared to \$200 million. There has only been one tuition increase in 13 years, and that one was five years ago. But our student population has increased from 17,600 to 24,000, or 36 percent, since 1994. Our faculty and staff during the same period increased from 11,200 to 14,200, an increase of only 27 percent. Clearly we need funding appropriate to our research mission—more money per student, not less.

We have, of course, been raising funds on our own. The Stony Brook Foundation Endowment Fund is now almost seven times the size it was 14 years ago. Our total assets in the Foundation have increased almost tenfold, from \$21.5 million to \$201 million. In 1993-1994 we raised about \$4 million; in 2007-2008, the number was almost \$50 million. The Capital Campaign, now in its seventh year, will raise more than its goal of \$300 million by the end of this academic year. We now award more than eight times as many dollars for merit-based scholarships,

The basic research conducted at our new R&D Park will help to develop into the products of the future.



**We're more selective:
We admit only
43 percent of our
freshman applicants
vs. 58 percent in 1996.**

thanks in large part to the work of the Stony Brook Foundation. We have also received—yet again—the largest gift ever given to SUNY, an honor first captured by the Charles B. Wang Center and now by the new Simons Center for Geometry and Physics, given by our former Chair of Math Jim Simons, and his wife and our former doctoral student Marilyn Simons. Two other former faculty members, Henry and Marsha Laufer, will soon announce a major gift for a new Center in Computational Biology and Genomics.

Once in a while, I have a vivid memory of times past. It happened to me recently when we were opening the spectacular new Phase One of the Hospital Major Modernization, and there, in a flash before my eyes, were vivid images of The Scaffolding—the multilevel eyesore that held together the Health Sciences Center from 1988 to 1998. There it sat, for ten years, most of them before I was here, to hold the cladding to the building because the builders had substituted for the stainless steel tie wires an inferior product that soon rusted through; the scaffolding kept the great blocks sheathing the building from crashing down. Then there was the Bridge to Nowhere—that bridge did begin to crash down.

In 1994 the central campus Mall was an enormous—enormous!—splay of blacktop, from one edge to the other. I was told it was blacktopped so that the crew wouldn't have to mow the grass, but I haven't had that verified. The only distraction was a squat, broken pedestal for—something; I never knew whether it had held up a statue or a fountain or a sundial, and in fact, it was a really ugly pedestal. There was no sign of a flower. No students. No faculty. No indication that life existed in these precincts. I mention that because now it is so pleasant to walk on campus, greet one's colleagues, run into students, dodge skateboards and bikes, and notice what is in bloom. There was a point at which I was at Berkeley and came out of my meetings to see hundreds of students enjoying the sunlight on campus; I wished our campus was as full of sun-soaked students as theirs. Well, now it is. Students do enjoy the amenities of the physical campus, and we also have an incredible Student Life staff, who have brought this campus alive with activities.





**Raising the bar:
In 1993/94 the
Stony Brook
Foundation raised
about \$4 million.
In 2008/09 it raised
\$50 million.**

In 1996, faced with the unrelieved blacktop desert, we enlisted Green Teams of faculty and staff to begin to plant and care for our own gardens. We also put tables and chairs around the Academic Mall. And by April 2000, the blacktop had been supplanted by our current Mall, and we celebrated with our first Fountain Fest. The decision to redesign the Mall was a practical one: We didn't have the money to replace or reface the neo-penal buildings—we could only afford to divert the eye.

Far more remarkable, of course, if not as controversial, is the number of new and renovated buildings that we have managed to construct in these 14 years. I've donned a lot of hard hats in my time. First came SAC, Phases I and II, followed by the Centers for Molecular Medicine, the Heavy Engineering Building, Kenneth P. LaValle Stadium, the West Apartments, the Child Care Center, the Charles B. Wang Center, the Humanities Building, the Center of Excellence in Wireless and Information Technology (CEWIT), and for our new School of Journalism, the Newsroom of the Future. The Hospital expanded with its Ambulatory Surgery Center, the Cancer and Imaging Center, and Phase I of the Major Modernization. There was also a stunning renovation of the Avram Theater at Southampton, thanks to a gift from the donor, and we are completing the Library there that had been begun before we purchased the property. Now in progress is the new space for Biomedical Engineering and the major renovation of the old Chemistry Building, as well as design for the new Energy Center. For student life, we are completing residence facilities for 600 more students, the renovation of Roth Cafeteria, and the design—finally—for the Student Recreation Center. Outdoors, we created the Staller Terraces, the Administrative Circle garden and fountain, the new entrance drive, Javits Plaza, and many road improvements. One of the most amazing facts is that despite all the new gross square footage on campus, some 16 percent in total, in the

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A student inside the light-filled Charles B. Wang Center, which celebrates Asian and American cultures.

past six years our crackerjack Facilities team has managed to restrain electricity usage to an increase of only 6 percent, and they actually decreased gas and steam usage by 24 percent and water by 38 percent. Absolutely amazing!

But, of course, our footprint has spread far beyond our 1,100 acres on the Stony Brook campus. First came Stony Brook Manhattan, all 15,000 usable square feet, now expanded to twice that size. Next came the new Incubator space at Calverton, complete with 50 acres of land. Then we really got serious about what one wag called our “Manifest Destiny” policy. We added 246 acres for the new Research and Development Park; that land and that mission will prove to be one of the most important strategies for economic development on Long Island. The first building, CEWIT,

is ready for business, and we are beginning to build the second one, for energy innovation. In all, there will be ten buildings focused on critical areas of research and development such as biomedical, ecological, and transportation research.

The most important event in these 14 years was our election to the Association of American Universities.

And finally came Stony Brook Southampton, a campus with such promise for the future that I predict it will provide a model for other institutions.

It is not just its ecological sustainability mission; it is also the design of the curriculum, the pedagogical innovations, the interdisciplinarity, and the interaction of students with faculty and administrators as well as the community. This will be a widely emulated learning environment.

In many ways the most important event in these 14 years was our election to the Association of American Universities (AAU). For 44 years our aspiration had been election to this association of the top research universities, public and private, in North America.

Close-up of a cast acrylic sculpture titled Why, located in the lobby of the Student Activities Center.





Research funding has increased from \$89 million in 1994 to \$170 million in 2008.

And in 2001 we, along with Texas A&M University, were selected. No other university has been accepted in the seven years that have followed. Membership in AAU denotes that Stony Brook is one of the 62 best North American universities in terms of research and other criteria.

Research has always been pre-eminent at Stony Brook since John Toll first lured Nobelist C.N. Yang from the Princeton Institute to what was then a raw-boned, half-baked campus. It was perhaps part of our destiny that we would eventually take over management of Brookhaven National Lab. I don't know if you remember how controversial Brookhaven was when we competed to manage it—remember the tritium plume and the accelerator rods? I remember well; there were plenty of intelligent and respected people who wondered why I would even *think* we should compete to manage the Lab. But I did, and some others did, too. It took heavy-duty persuasion to convince the SUNY Board of Trustees to give permission to make the bid. Here we are, a decade later, having successfully managed the Lab with our partners at Battelle, thanks in no small part to the outstanding leadership first of our own John Marburger and now our colleague Sam Aronson. We are now on the verge of recompeting for the management contract, a periodic Department of Energy requirement.

And now the Alliance of Stony Brook, Brookhaven, and Cold Spring Harbor, embraced by Govs. Eliot Spitzer and David Paterson, is being realized. This is an alliance unmatched anywhere—a State institution, a federal research facility, and a private laboratory, linked together, with State funding, to work on important scientific matters such as cancer, neuroscience, and quantitative biology. The Alliance will make Long Island the place to do research because of this remarkable linkage of outstanding researchers and world-class equipment.

The Research and Development Park is another essential step in the building of our research strength, helping the basic research done here to develop into the products of the future. The R&D Park will enable University researchers, both faculty and

students, to collaborate with graduates of our three incubators and corporate research teams in applied research leading to new products. The very fact of such a research base—the Alliance, the incubators, the R&D Park—will attract even more intellectual capital to the Island. Two endeavors have already begun, the Center of Wireless and Information Technologies and the Advanced Energy Research and Technology Center, and others will follow.

So Stony Brook is truly the economic engine of Long Island, our \$1.8 billion budget responsible through the multiplier effect for \$4.7 billion in economic activity on Long Island. And besides that, we are educating the next generation of scientists and business leaders.

Stony Brook University Medical Center is in the top 4 percent nationally for survival of trauma from injuries.

In our Hospital, not only has the number of patients increased significantly, from 63,000 to 100,000 annually, an increase of 59 percent, the caseload has moved increasingly toward the most difficult tertiary cases. For example, our kidney transplant program, initiated in 1981, had done 298 transplants by 1994, 13 years into the program, an average of 23 a year. Since then, in the past 14 years, we have done an additional 759, or an average of 54 cases. Last year saw 73

transplants, and this year we have already done 59. We won three new prizes for kidney transplants in October. And that's just part of the Hospital story. We are in the top 4 percent nationally for survival of trauma from injuries; we have the second lowest risk-adjusted cardiac mortality rate nationally; and, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement recognized us for success in reducing mortality. We even won the Innovator of the Year Award for Food Services—few hospitals can claim that glory. The newly completed modernization project includes ten new Operating Rooms for dedicated specialties, a dedicated Operating Room pharmacy to enhance patient safety, an expanded Emergency Department

Water elements such as a “brook” and fountains unify and brighten the Stony Brook campus, which is landscaped with indigenous trees and hardy perennials.







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with private rooms, a new Women and Infants Center, and even a meditative labyrinth outside. I have many times marveled at medical miracles at Stony Brook—the reattachment of a man’s two hands severed in an industrial accident, the saving of a young boy whose head was run over by an SUV, the delivery of triplets immediately followed by heart surgery for the mother, the successful delivery of sextuplets. Now with our new equipment, such as the da Vinci® robot, we are even more capable of miracles, everyday miracles that change people’s lives.

Our Veterans Home provides daily tribute to those who risked their lives to protect us. The Vets Home operates at 99.6 percent capacity—if you’ve been there, you know why. Since it opened in 1991, it has served 3,000 veterans, and served them well. It also provides the opportunity for our future doctors, nurses, therapists, and social workers to gain experience with a geriatric population.

There are lots of ways to measure the quality of a research university—the number of federal research dollars, the amount of royalty income, the number of patents, the number of members of the Academies, Nobel Prize winners, Fields Medals, Grammys. In all these categories, we have a proud story to tell, and those are the things I tend to brag about—you’ve heard me many times before.

But there are other bragging points that could get lost in the AAU context of great research—the quality of undergraduate education, the advising of students, the personal touch. My first year here, I learned that Stony Brook had barely slid under the wire for accreditation because of undergraduate education although we were outstanding in the graduate and research areas. I was told by the Accreditation Team that we must improve significantly in five years or we would not be accredited. That Middle States Report certainly got my attention. When I thought about it, I realized that we were not alone when it came to research universities underserving undergraduates. And so I visited the former SUNY Chancellor and U.S. Commissioner of Education Ernest L. Boyer, who was then head of the Carnegie Foundation, on whose board I

served. We agreed something needed doing about the situation, and the National Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University (renamed for Ernie after his untimely death) was born. Many distinguished academics, including C.N. Yang, served. Our report, hotly received when issued, has changed the nature of undergraduate education, and Stony Brook, like all other universities, has profited from its insights. Most particularly, Stony Brook does a fine job of undergraduate research, and now offers seminars to all freshmen. Subsequently our undergraduate colleges have become an important part of the student experience here. Needless to say, the last Middle States Accreditation Report found our undergraduate programming working just fine.

That newfound commitment to undergraduate education has certainly paid off. The most astonishing thing about our enrollment is that at the same time that it has grown by 36 percent, SAT scores have risen dramatically. Although we cannot compare data

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before 1996, the year the SATs were recentered, since then we have witnessed an increase of 128 points at the same time that our freshman class has grown by 1,050 students, or 60 percent. Let me repeat that: Although our Stony Brook freshman class has increased by 60 percent, from 1,750 to 2,800 students, our SAT scores have simultaneously increased by 128 points. Our applications have almost doubled since

1994—up 91 percent in 2008—to the highest number of any SUNY campus. Only 37 four-year institutions in the country had more applications in fall 2007 than Stony Brook; we had more applications than Stanford, Harvard, or Yale, among others. Out-of-state freshman enrollments have almost quadrupled, from 117 to 424, or 15 percent of the freshman class, and added to upstate New York enrollments, bring the total to 28 percent of all freshmen. This fact

The University has a strong presence in Africa with the Turkana Basin Institute in Kenya.

helps explain why the old canard that “no one is here on the weekend” is history. This campus is alive and well, all week and on the weekend. The only decrease we show, I report with pride, is in our percentage of applicants admitted, down from 55 percent in 1994 to 43 percent now; according to *U.S. News & World Report*, we tie with UC San Diego at 46th out of

260 doctorate-granting institutions. And our diversity ranks very highly both in SUNY and nationally.

One of the best things about Stony Brook is those times when the graduate and undergraduate missions merge. One sees that these days in research projects that involve undergraduate researchers as well as graduate assistants, and learning is improved for both groups. Our undergraduate education is enhanced by the fact that our students learn in a context of serious research; it is increasingly difficult to separate learning into discrete little boxes.

And that, of course, is tied to the fact that learning, from the freshman experience to advanced research, occurs in interdisciplinary enterprises. Such an area as Biomedical Engineering, for example, thrives at Stony Brook because our campus hosts researchers in medicine, biology, engineering, and other scientific fields who can join together in applying their disciplines to problems. Our campus is blessed by the fact that our Health Sciences schools and Hospital are contiguous to the rest of campus rather than separated off. Given the interdisciplinary nature of research now, that proximity time and again provides us advantages other campuses don't have. Applied research is enhanced by the fact that our Hospital is so closely linked to the rest of campus so that we truly can move science from the bench to the bedside. And

More than a third of our recent graduates go on to graduate or professional school—a rate higher than the national average.



increasingly those links extend further—for example, the Center for Medical Humanities, Compassionate Care, and Bioethics is linking with the social sciences and humanities for important new work.

Those interrelationships are what will distinguish Stony Brook in the years to come as a home to state-of-the-art research. They will make a profound difference in the education of our students, graduate and undergraduate, for the ability to think in interdisciplinary ways will be all-important. The Boyer Report emphasized interdisciplinarity as one of the Ten Ways to Improve Undergraduate Education, but if I were to chair Boyer

Commission 2, I believe our top goal would be greater interdisciplinarity in learning. The transition from those of us whose Ph.D.s fit neatly into academic departments and the younger generation who will acquire knowledge through very different means not then available to us will be one of the most interesting issues of today's and tomorrow's universities. It will affect every element from the classroom to the administrative structure.

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Stony Brook is engaged in an interdisciplinary experiment at Southampton, exploring the theme of sustainability.

Stony Brook is now engaged in an interdisciplinary experiment at Southampton, where the theme of sustainability is explored in every aspect, from the majors and courses to the decision-making process for campus life. Here at a new campus, unaffected by tradition and, in fact, creating its own traditions, faculty and students together will be able to explore new modes of learning constructed in the computer age to deal with contemporary issues, always within the context of the age-old values. Once again Stony Brook has that spirit of adventure and innovation that led to the birth and rapid ascent of our research university, a spirit reborn for a new time with new agendas.

Southampton provides a great location for faculty and students to immerse themselves in the very specific local ecological



**Since 1998/99
the total amount of
scholarship dollars
has increased from
approximately
\$1.5 million to
\$12.5 million.**

issues, both coastal and marine. Our School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences has just added the Institute for Ocean Conservation Science to tackle pressing threats to the marine ecosystem. The Stony Brook fleet has blossomed from the lowly Frump of years past to a group of 12 vessels, headed by our research vessel, appropriately named the Seawolf. We've come a long way by sea as well as by land.

But if we are committed to the local—and we certainly are in terms of our research, economic development, and artistic and cultural programming at all three campus locations—we are also citizens of the world, providing our students opportunities to learn about other cultures by firsthand experiences in India, China, Korea, Tanzania, Italy, Russia, England, Jamaica, Argentina—around the world. Our African initiative has grown unusually strong. Stony Brook is an absolute powerhouse in African paleontological and other scientific studies. Our Turkana Basin Institute in Kenya, headed by Richard, Meave, and Louise Leakey; the outstanding paleoanthropological work that Fred Grine and his team are doing in South Africa; our ValBio rain forest campus in Madagascar, headed by MacArthur genius and lemur expert Patricia Wright; and our fossil field site also in Madagascar, run by David Krause, which is amazingly rich in unique cannibalistic dinosaurs, grass-eating crocodiles, and even a mystery mammal; are all world-class research sites in which our faculty make news and our students participate. And that is just a sampling.

We offer other advantages for our students, our faculty and staff, and the community. One of the very best is the Staller Center's arts programming, now celebrating its 20th anniversary. Thanks to the Staller family, we have a world-class facility with, among other things, a 40-foot movie screen. Alan Inkle is an extraordinary director, who has created both programming and traditions dear to our hearts. In 1994 the Staller Center hosted 125 events and attracted 115,000 attendees. Last year there were 400 events and more than 375,000 attendees. The Film Festival is a favorite of movie folk, both for its 1,000-seat house—indie

directors and stars love the big audiences—and for the warm hospitality Alan’s staff provides; stars like Christopher Plummer, Alan Alda, Rod Steiger, Eli Wallach, and Patricia Neal have come to our Festival. The house also gives one free ticket to a show to every entering student, getting him or her started in the right directions in the arts.

Great public universities—and even some private ones—have powerful athletic teams, too. In 1994 in lowly Division III, we had aspirations. And move up we did, as quickly as the NCAA would allow—and we’re still moving. We are fortunate in the leadership of Athletic Director Jim Fiore and the notable group of coaches and administrators he has assembled. Our athletes really are students first, and the administrative staff make sure it stays that way. But the teams are giving us plenty of excitement in the arena and on the field as well, and our conference championships are beginning to roll in. A few statistics: In 1994 our men’s basketball team didn’t have one athlete over 6’6”, and this year we have three who are 6’8” and taller. The number of out-of-state football players was then 8 percent, with the farthest distance Massachusetts; now it’s 60 percent out-of-state, with players from California, Florida, and, of course, Texas. And in basketball—from 17 percent out of state, we’ve moved to 87 percent, including athletes from California, Florida, England, Poland, and South Africa. From competing with schools like Pace and Kings Point, we’ve moved to include games with Kentucky, Penn State, Villanova, Notre Dame, UConn, and Virginia. Attendance reflects the growth of our program—from a total of 10,500 to 50,000, for football alone from 3,000 to 23,000.

And then there is the marching band. I tried for many years to strike up interest in a marching band, but I was always told it wouldn’t be possible to have one at Stony Brook. That was before I sat down with the dynamic trio, Jerry Stein, Jim Fiore, and Perry Goldstein. Two years ago the new Band Director John Leddy, with very little time to work at it, managed to interest 17 students in



starting a band; what they lacked in numbers they made up in musicianship and enthusiasm. Now just two years later, we have 110 members, a color guard, a dance team, and five tubas. John

Athletics attendance reflects the growth of our program—from a total of 10,500 to 50,000.

has assembled a group of students that are the most talented, the most diverse, and the most spirited of any band in America—and now we know we can't really do *without* a marching band.

That is one of hundreds of student activities. From the Motorsports Club—which actually entrusted me with their MiniBaja car on the practice racecourse (the car that won second in international competition yet!)—to the Ballroom

Dance Club to the various ethnic, religious, political, you name it, clubs, 300 in all. The number and variety have grown as our students and faculty have diversified. Look at the list on our Web site—it's astonishing. Professional journalists, knitting and crocheting, equestrians, belly dancing, you name it.

Faculty and staff participate in wide-ranging community programs. A Stony Brook tradition is building Habitat houses—we are now working on our seventh. The Health Sciences are particularly impressive in their outreach to the community for health care. Our students also have projects in the community. There is a strong sense of giving back.

At every level Stony Brook contributes to the community and the well-being of the State. So my message is this: It is time—past time—for New York to fund and support its State institutions to be competitive with other states. It is time to think of SUNY and CUNY not as political establishments but as the bedrock of New York success. Think back to City College, the mother of us all in New York, created as a free college for emigrants and those too impoverished to aspire to success, home for many years to both faculty and students who had fled the Holocaust, and home of 12 Nobel Prize winners from those humble beginnings. Stony Brook



Our total enrollment has increased by more than a third to 24,000 from 17,600 in 1994.

is inordinately proud of our three Nobel Prize winners, but SUNY needs sufficient funding to make such noble research possible.

Per-student tax support in the Three Village District schools is \$20,400; per-student tax support for Stony Brook students, graduate and undergraduate, is \$12,400. Don't tell me we can't do better. Our in-state undergraduate tuition and fees are fourth-lowest of all AAU institutions (only Florida, Arizona, and North Carolina are lower). Even more remarkable, our undergraduate and graduate *out-of-state* tuition and fees are the lowest in AAU. SUNY tuition has not increased in five years. It is less than half that of Rutgers, Michigan, or Illinois, and just over a third of Penn State's. In fact, a Pennsylvania resident could choose to come to Stony Brook and pay out-of-state tuition and fees rather than pay in-state at Penn State and still save \$1,600 a year.

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Don't get me wrong. I do NOT advocate loading on the students the responsibility that belongs to the State. I do believe in keeping tuition as low as feasible for our students. And I certainly know we must provide TAP or other scholarship funds so that no student is deprived of an education because of tuition increases. But it makes me angry when students end up getting large tuition increases when the State *decreases* support for the University rather than the students' getting additional value for an additional tuition burden. Students are entitled to a rational tuition policy that lets them plan for their educational costs; they should not have to bail out the State, as happened five years ago when, after eight years of no growth, tuition was increased by 28 percent.

What is happening around the world with those countries determined to take world dominance away from the United States? China's university enrollments have soared from 3.6 million in 1998 to 25 million in 2006; in 1995 the Chinese set a goal of 100 new universities in the 21st century. India is building 16 new research universities. Singapore has determined to have one of the best ten universities in the world within ten years—and I have no doubt they will. A former provost of the University of California system and, according to the Albany *Times Union*, a candidate for

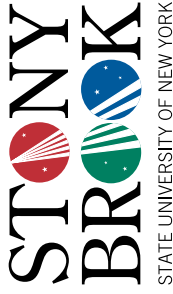


SUNY chancellor, has just accepted an offer to become provost of United Arab Emirates University instead. And New York is cutting the budget of SUNY more than any state agency except the Department of Corrections.

Will the United States let itself fall behind on its most important strength, intellectual capital? Will New York? No one faces greater challenges or greater opportunities than our institutions do. But we must have the financial support to carry out what I consider the most important agenda in American education—public higher education. That has been America’s great strength; we must not abandon it now. And New York, with huge economic problems upon us, must not shortchange this fundamental building block of a strong economy.

I love this state, and I love Stony Brook. I consider the opportunity to serve our remarkable students the greatest privilege we could have. What we do here is vitally important. Those we teach here are the nation’s hope for tomorrow. The research we do is the key to health and prosperity in the future. But we must have the funding necessary to achieve our mission. We must give our all—but the State that depends on us must support us in doing so. New York deserves no less. ■

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