



Impact of Federal Cuts and Attacks on New York State

The Trump administration has brazenly attacked higher education and healthcare since taking office on January 20th, and the list of attacks grows each day. These assaults consist of executive orders that have no legal basis and exhibit a complete disregard for Congress and our nation's core principles of separation of powers and checks and balances. In addition, these attacks include crackdowns on academic freedom and free speech, which threatens all of us. Below is an overview of the most salient impacts on New York State related to higher education and health as of May 1.

We continue to monitor the developments daily and are pushing back against these threats. I encourage you to visit UUP's [homepage](#) for ways to take action, including sending e-letters to your members of Congress and signing up for rallies and other actions. [Click here](#) to sign up to become a UUP Rapid Responder, and you will receive notifications whenever there is a call to action for political advocacy, labor solidarity actions, and ways to fight for a strong UUP contract.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Capping of indirect costs for NIH grant-funded research at 15%

The Trump administration instituted a 15% cap on reimbursement for indirect costs for NIH grant-funded research. Our research depends on federal reimbursement for overhead costs, such as facilities and maintenance and administrative staff. In positive news, Judge Angel Kelley of the Federal District Court in Massachusetts expanded upon her previous temporary restraining orders and permanently barred NIH from limiting medical research funding. However, the Trump administration will almost certainly appeal the decision, so the fight is far from over. The NIH cuts will hit New York State particularly hard. New York is the second leading recipient of NIH funding, and 30,000 jobs in the state are supported by NIH grants. New York stands to lose \$850 million in NIH grants, impacting 250 institutions. The SUNY system alone could lose \$40 million in NIH funding. NIH funding is absolutely critical for the life-saving research our members conduct on serious diseases such as cancer, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's. We will continue to monitor the development of this case.

Freezing of federal grants for ideological reasons

The Trump administration also froze federal grants for ideological reasons, specifically to stop “DEI, woke gender ideology, and the Green New Deal.” This freeze has resulted in many of our members having their research funding halted and their projects thrown into chaos. Due to the indiscriminate application of the freeze, even projects that have no relation to social justice issues have been stalled. A federal judge in the District of Columbia temporarily blocked the administration’s efforts to freeze as much as \$3 trillion in federal grants and loans, appropriations that were already approved by Congress. Additionally, on April 21, news broke that the NIH developed new guidelines banning all future grant funding to universities that allow DEI or the boycotting of Israel. The final outcome is unclear, and we will continue to monitor the situation.

Cuts to the National Science Foundation (NSF)

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has been cut by 10% so far, or about 170 employees. In addition, the NSF terminated hundreds of active research awards for being related to DEI or misinformation. This has resulted in the termination of several research awards across SUNY, disrupting our members’ vital work.

Elimination of DEI language and programs

Trump issued an executive order calling for the removal of all DEI language and programs, and the U.S. Department of Education issued a letter threatening to withhold funding from colleges and universities if they do not scrub DEI from their websites, curricula, programs, etc. On a positive note, the NYS Education Department stood up and resoundingly rejected these orders, DEI is still on SUNY’s webpage, and UUP remains fiercely committed to DEI. This matter is currently playing out in the courts.

Executive order denouncing “gender ideology extremism”

Trump issued an executive order titled “Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government.” This order, thinly veiled under the guise of “protecting women,” states “It is the policy of the United States to recognize two sexes, male and female.” This executive order wrongly denounces gender identity and vilifies members of the LGBTQ+ community. Furthermore, the order rescinds all guidance documents designed to support LGBTQ+ students and prevent discrimination.

Targeting of legal residents and citizens for exercising their right to free speech

The Trump administration has cracked down hard on free speech, particularly targeting individuals who have engaged in pro-Palestinian protests or have criticized Israel. The blanket approach has swept up individuals who have little to no confirmed ties to such

protests, including American citizens. ICE agents in plain clothes are sweeping people up off the streets, often without charging them with any crime. Just one example is Rumeysa Ozturk, a Muslim graduate student at Tufts University who came to the U.S. on a Fulbright scholarship. She was detained and faces deportation for co-writing an essay critical of Israel. People disappearing without any regard for due process demonstrates the grave threat the authoritarian federal regime poses to all of us and our academic freedom.

There have been reports of well over a thousand international students at universities across the country losing their legal status. Numerous SUNY students had their visas cancelled, including 13 (4 current students and 9 recent graduates) at the University at Buffalo, 5 at Binghamton, 1 at Plattsburgh, 4 (2 undergraduate students and 2 recent graduates) at UAlbany, and 11 at Stony Brook. The reasons are not known. Fortunately, after a slate of lawsuits mounted by students, the federal government reversed course and restored the status of student visas in the federal database. According to SUNY, all 46 affected SUNY students had their status restored. However, these students' lives have already been severely disrupted, and future threats to their legal status still loom.

Withholding appropriated funds from institutions of higher education to blackmail them into compliance

The Trump administration has threatened to withhold billions of dollars in funding from colleges and universities if they do not accede to his onerous list of demands. So far, Trump has targeted elite universities to set an example and intimidate others. The federal government has frozen funding to Columbia over alleged antisemitism, the University of Pennsylvania because the school allowed a transgender woman to be a member of its women's swim team, and Harvard for alleged antisemitism and DEI programs. Thankfully, Harvard stood their ground and refused the administration's long list of demands, which included reducing the power of untenured faculty and students, sharing all admissions and hiring data with the federal government, bringing in an external auditor for "viewpoint diversity," and immediately ceasing all DEI initiatives. Within hours of Harvard's decision, federal officials said they would freeze \$2.2 billion in multiyear grants to the university, along with a \$60 million contract. Harvard set a positive example by standing up for academic freedom, and it helped set the tone for resistance.

Following Harvard's decision, Columbia informed its campus community that it would not relinquish autonomy or authority, a shift from their earlier capitulation. In addition, on April 22, the American Association of Colleges and Universities circulated a statement signed by 187 higher education leaders condemning the Trump administration's attacks on academic freedom and the coercive use of public research funding. As of April 22, 10 SUNY campus presidents had signed on, as did multiple CUNY campus presidents and the CUNY Chancellor. Notably, SUNY Chancellor John King's name was absent. On April 24, UUP, NYSUT, and PSC-CUNY released a joint press statement calling on the SUNY and CUNY Chancellors to stand up to the Trump

administration and calling out Chancellor King for not signing onto the letter. Our efforts were effective; the letter now bears the SUNY Chancellor's signature. As of May 1, the letter has 586 signatures.

Faculty are also standing up. Two professors from Rutgers University in New Jersey drafted a mutual defense compact for the Big Ten schools that has been endorsed by the faculty senates of a dozen institutions. Additionally, on April 26, SUNY UFS released a resolution in defense of higher education.

Investigation into 60 campuses for alleged antisemitism, including 2 SUNY state-operated campuses

In March, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights sent a letter to 60 institutions warning them of potential enforcement actions over failing to address alleged antisemitic discrimination and harassment. SUNY Binghamton and Purchase are included in this list.

Gutting and potential abolition of the Department of Education

The federal government fired over 1,300 employees at the Department of Education, reducing its workforce by 46%. This has significantly hindered the department's ability to carry out its duties. Additionally, Trump issued an executive order calling for the abolition of the Department of Education in a "final mission." Trump also ordered the relocation of core services out of the Department of Education into other agencies. Management of the nation's \$1.6 trillion student loan portfolio will be transferred to the Small Business Administration (SBA). The SBA currently manages a portfolio that is only one third the size of the student loan portfolio, and the SBA is slated to be cut by 46%, which will further impair the government's ability to manage federal loans and will cause chaos for borrowers. Furthermore, Trump said that special education services and nutrition programs will be transferred to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HHS, headed by Robert F. Kennedy Jr., is also facing steep workforce reductions. So far, the department has been reduced by 24%, or about 20,000 employees.

Budget proposals to claw back student financial aid and loans to pay for tax cuts to the rich

Congress is considering a host of changes to student aid and loans that will make it much harder to afford and access higher education. Congressional Republicans are utilizing reconciliation, a budget process that is filibuster-proof and only requires a simple majority in each house. The House education committee plans to reduce federal spending on education by at least \$330 billion over ten years, and they recently released preliminary plans for overhauling the student loan and aid system. Congressional Republicans' proposals include increasing credit requirements for Pell grants, terminating subsidized undergraduate loans, ending Graduate and Parent PLUS

loans, eliminating current income-driven repayment plans, curtailing public service loan forgiveness, and implementing new limits on loan amounts.

Such reductions in student aid have been proposed to help pay for extending the 2017 tax cuts to the wealthy, which are set to expire at the end of 2025. Extending the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will result in about \$4 to \$4.5 billion in lost revenue. Nearly 40% of SUNY students receive federal Pell grants, allowing them to pursue higher education and upward mobility. This opportunity is under serious threat due to the Republicans' proposed cuts.

Termination of teacher training grants

In a 5-4 vote, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed Trump to freeze \$65 million in teacher training grants. These grants support the Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) and Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) programs, which Congress established and funded to address teacher shortages and to staff underserved schools and high-need areas such as math and special education. Trump targeted these programs because they supposedly violate his anti-DEI policy. The halting of this funding could negatively impact NYS and SUNY, according to the lawsuit to which NYS is a party. \$16 million was appropriated to SUNY and CUNY for training hundreds of teachers to fill critical vacancies in New York. The SUNY Research Foundation, on behalf of the University at Buffalo, received a five-year TQP grant in 2023 and a SEED grant in 2022.

Cuts to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has been cut by 78%, about 140 employees. The NEH has cancelled most of its grant programs, and grant recipients received emails that their funding was terminated immediately. The agency's funding is being redirected to further Trump's agenda, including patriotic programming. The NEH provided 680 awards to New York organizations and individuals between 2019 and 2023, and many of these have directly benefited SUNY. SUNY-specific impacts include the following:

- SUNY RF grant to develop digital humanities materials, an advanced course, and a community-wide speaker series for the study and instruction of Spanish language and culture for heritage speakers
- University at Buffalo grant to conduct research and create an online publication that examines the ways in which land use in Bali's Alas Merta Jati forest can be described using satellite imagery, geographic information systems, and artificial intelligence, as well as the ways in which these descriptions interact with traditional knowledge and sustainability tactics
- SUNY Potsdam's National Endowment for the Humanities Faculty Development Program, which is a yearly summer seminar providing faculty with valuable opportunities to enrich their knowledge of the subjects that they teach and research by working with distinguished outside experts, studying alongside other scholars and instructors, and undertaking individual projects

Changes to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) is the largest funder of the arts and arts education in communities across the nation. It benefits higher education institutions like SUNY. For instance, in 2021 the Dorsky Museum at SUNY New Paltz received a \$25,000 grant for the exhibition “Life After the Revolution: Kate Millett’s Art Colony for Women.” In 2016, SUNY partnered with the NEA to host Poetry Out Loud competitions at campuses across the state to foster a love of literature and poetry. Under the Trump administration, the focus of the NEA has sharply shifted. Due to Trump’s anti-DEI directives, the NEA has terminated its Challenge America grant program for FY 2026, which primarily funds small organizations that provide access to the arts for historically underserved communities. Instead, the agency will prioritize programs that celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States.

HEALTH

Cuts to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has been cut by 24%, around 20,000 workers. The Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, housed within HHS, are each losing at least 20% of their staff. The effects of these cuts will ripple throughout our nation, as the work of these agencies affects every American’s life, whether through monitoring the safety of food and medications, tackling disease outbreaks, or overseeing maternal health, tobacco control, and the distribution of vaccines. Trump and the health secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., intend to return the CDC to its “core mission” of infectious disease. “Converting C.D.C. to an agency solely focused on infectious diseases takes us back to 1948 without realizing that in 2025, the leading causes of death are noncommunicable disease,” said Dr. Anand Parekh, who served in the health department during the Obama administration. Additionally, the National Institutes of Health is losing 1,200 staff members, which may further exacerbate the issues and delays with research grants. Moreover, minority health offices throughout HHS have been shut down, which will likely exacerbate health disparities across the nation.

Congressional budget proposal to cut Medicaid by \$880 billion over 10 years

Congressional Republicans are considering massive Medicaid cuts to pay for tax cuts to the ultra-rich, specifically extending the 2017 tax cuts. The House budget resolution directs the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction over Medicaid, to reduce spending by a minimum of \$880 billion over 10 years. Some potential policy ideas Republicans are floating include work requirements, reducing support for the ACA expansion population, and abolishing or limiting the provider tax. In addition, on April 10 CMS announced it will no longer approve new Designated State

Health Program (DSHP) expenditures by states, imperiling New York's innovative solutions to social determinants of health and provider shortages.

These cuts to Medicaid will have catastrophic effects on New York. Medicaid comprises the largest portion of federal funding in the NYS budget at 63%, and the NYS budget anticipates \$58 billion in federal Medicaid funds for FY2026. It is estimated that New York could lose roughly \$10 to \$20 billion in federal funds. Without this federal aid, New York will be forced to make cuts to public goods and services. This could potentially include restricting Medicaid benefits and making mid-year cuts to other public goods, such as higher education. Furthermore, Medicaid serves about 7 million New Yorkers and is crucial for keeping safety net hospitals like our public SUNY hospitals running. SUNY Downstate ranks #1 out of 143 hospitals in NYS for Medicaid revenue as a share of net patient revenue. Moreover, current Medicaid rates to providers do not even meet the cost of care, and federal cuts will make rate increases highly unlikely, keeping our hospitals in untenable financial situations.

Congressional proposals to cut the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Congressional Republicans are also considering steep cuts to SNAP—as much as \$230 billion over ten years—in order to pay for tax cuts for the ultra-rich. The federal government could potentially require states to provide a match for SNAP benefits costs, which could force states to cut benefits or eligibility, or both. If SNAP is cut, the impact on our campus communities could be detrimental. About half of SUNY students deal with food insecurity, negatively impacting their health and academic success. SUNY has been working to raise awareness of SNAP and to connect eligible students with benefits. Last year, SUNY called on campus presidents to ensure that beginning in Fall 2024, every eligible student is identified and receives personalized outreach and application support for SNAP. Federal cuts to SNAP would have a direct negative impact on our students' wellbeing.

Abrupt termination of federal grants for health and mental health

Federal grants that were supposed to continue through the end of September were abruptly cut off without notice. As a result, New York will lose almost \$370 million in federal grants.

The Department of Health (DOH) expects to lose over \$300 million in funding for organizations across the State.

- This funding supports many activities that are core to public health functioning, including virus surveillance, outbreak response, electronic data exchange, public dashboards, infection prevention activities in hospitals and nursing homes, laboratory reporting, program operations, and support to local health departments.

- The backbone of the State's public health infrastructure will be weakened significantly due to reduced virus surveillance and reporting systems that can no longer provide communities and families with real-time information on developing outbreaks, laboratory support and testing, data collection and analysis, public-facing dashboards, data and analytics.
- Losing this funding will shutter multiple areas of work that are largely seen as foundational components of the Department's response to emerging infectious diseases. These cuts will also eliminate the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention's COVID-19 Health Disparities Grant, which funded 135 subcontractors to support community-based work addressing health disparities in New York, such as mental health, maternal and infant health, and food security.

The Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) expects to lose \$40 million in funding, which will result in significant cuts to addiction and prevention services, treatment supports and access to resources for individuals struggling with substance use. This work includes:

- Transitional housing
- Support for programs, access to treatment, recovery, and other basic services
- Expansion of outpatient clinics
- Administering and implementing Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) which is a comprehensive public health approach to identify those at risk of developing substance use disorders and deliver early intervention

The Office of Mental Health (OMH) expects to lose \$27 million in funding for programs and services for individuals experiencing mental health and/or substance use needs. These programs were intended to allow individuals in need of care to remain in their homes, connected to their natural support systems during treatment. The loss of this funding will result in an increased reliance on emergency services and hospital-based care with fewer community resources and supports for our most vulnerable New Yorkers, including:

- Crisis Stabilization and Crisis Residence Programs
- Adult Assertive Community Treatment Teams (ACT) serving individuals with serious mental illness
- Grants to expand and improve upon the mobile crisis services statewide, including 9-8-8 crisis call centers.