

Oneonta UUP Delegation in Albany Advocate for Stronger Investment in SUNY

– by Shirley A. Clark, Oneonta UUP Chapter President

Despite the date shifting to **March 17** due to winter storm Hernando, the Oneonta UUP Chapter still turned out to be a strong group of members committed to advocating for investment in SUNY. A dedicated team of SUNY Oneonta faculty and professionals traveled to Albany for Advocacy Day, joining colleagues from across the state to push for meaningful funding for public higher education. Representing SUNY Oneonta were **Ethan Fox, Penina Kamina, Anthony Nichols, Jessie Simpauco, Shirley Clark, and Marvin Rodriguez**, each lending their voice to a unified call for a stronger, more equitable SUNY. Our team had the opportunity to speak directly with **Assemblyman Brian Miller** and advocate for our SUNY budget priorities. Ethan Fox stepped forward to make a video with a strong message to Governor Hochul: Tax the Rich! Meanwhile, Anthony and Marvin went on to distribute literature containing our requests to Legislatures inside the Capitol Building. Our district **Senator, Peter Oberacker**, unfortunately was not present at this meeting, so we followed up with an e-mail request outlining the UUPs Budget priorities for SUNY.









Key Budget Priorities Presented by the Delegation

Campus Operating Aid

- \$141.8 million total, including:
 - \$100 million in system-wide operating support
 - \$41.8 million in targeted aid to close structural deficits at the most fiscally stressed SUNY Campuses ESF, Buffalo State, Fredonia, and Potsdam. This funding is essential to stabilizing campuses, protecting academic programs, and preventing further cuts.

Full-Time Faculty & Professionals

- \$53 million to expand and retain full-time faculty and professional staff across all 29 state-operated campuses This investment would help reverse years of staffing erosion and ensure students receive the high-quality education they deserve.

SUNY Teaching Hospitals

- Full coverage of employee fringe benefits and debt service costs for Downstate, Upstate, and Stony Brook for \$75 million.
- Requesting \$82 million for Debt Service Costs.
- Approve Executive Budget item maintaining Capital Funding Reappropriations. \$750 million for Downstate and \$450 million for Upstate Medical Centers.
- Protection from federal Medicaid cuts These measures would safeguard the hospitals' ability to provide care, train medical professionals, and serve vulnerable communities.

Educational Opportunity Programs

- \$20 million increase for EOP
- \$5 million for Pre-Medical EOP
- Enactment of MHEOP (S.2046/A.3607) with \$5 million in funding
- These programs remain vital pathways for first-generation and economically disadvantaged students.

NY Opportunity Promise Scholarship

- Expansion to all SUNY campuses offering associate degrees in high-demand fields Currently, the scholarship is limited to community colleges, leaving many SUNY students without access to this opportunity.

SUNY Research Fund

- Creation of a state-sponsored fund to offset frozen federal NIH/NSF grants This would protect faculty research independence and ensure SUNY remains competitive in securing and sustaining research talent.

A Unified Message for a Stronger SUNY

The SUNY Oneonta delegation's presence in Albany underscored a simple truth: New York's public universities are indispensable, but they cannot thrive without meaningful state partnership. Our commitment and strong turnout for Oneonta UUP on Advocacy Day reflects a shared assurance to strengthening SUNY; not just for today's students, but for generations to come.