

Destruction and Resistance at SUNY¹

by

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THE STATE UNIVERSITY of New York turned fifty in 1998, but its mission-to provide New Yorkers with quality education at low cost-is endangered. Earlier this spring, SUNY faculty finally responded by revolting and issuing an unprecedented demand for the removal of the state-appointed university trustees.

New York public college tuition increased at three times the national average-from \$1,350 a year in 1989-90 to \$3,400 in `95-96. This hike is particularly glaring because the income gap between the rich and poor in New York now surpasses that of any other state.³ In a recent study, the New York Public Interest Research Group noted that the percentage of average family income needed to pay college tuition at New York public universities more than doubled from 4.6% in `89-90 to 11.25% in `95-96.⁴ Consequently, between 1995 and 1997, there was a 20% drop in freshmen enrollment from families earning between \$21,000 and \$45,000 a year, and a 14% drop from those earning between \$45,000 and \$85,000. Meanwhile, 14% more freshmen enrolled whose families earned more than \$105,000.

SUNY's crisis began in the 1980s when Governor Mario Cuomo and the state legislature enacted tax cuts, particularly for corporations and the wealthy. Together with a recession, these tax cuts led to New York State budget shortfalls. New York public college tuition more than doubled between 1990 and 1992 for SUNY students, 73% of whom receive financial aid.⁵ Cuomo's Republican successor, George Pataki, immediately enacted for the `95-96 school year the largest tuition increase in SUNY history-a \$750 hike accompanied by a \$200 million cut in SUNY's operating budget. That year, SUNY student enrollment dropped by 10,000.⁶

By 1995, most SUNY trustees were Pataki appointees, including E. E. Kailbourne, chair of Fleet Bank, Edward Cox, son-in-law of Richard Nixon, and Candace DeRussy, co-founder of Change New York, a powerful anti-tax organization. In January 1996, the new trustees forced Frederick Salerno, a Cuomo appointee, to resign as board chair. Afterwards, they denied SUNY Chancellor Thomas Bartlett the authority to appoint his own staff. Bartlett had disagreed with the governor's plans to cap Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) grants, saying "We cannot turn our backs on those who need our help the most."⁷ Deprived of decision-making power, Bartlett resigned in June 1996.

¹ This article was originally published by *Against The Current* (#82) at: <http://www.solidarity-us.org/node/915>.

² Ali Shehzad Zaidi writes frequently on education issues in New York. His essays have appeared in *Against the Current* as well as *Z* and *Covert Action Quarterly*, among others.

³ "Study Shows Income Gap in New York is Nation's Largest," *New York Times*, December 17, 1997: A1, B6.

⁴ Michael O'Loughlin, Blair Horner and Farouk Abdallah. *Opportunity Cost\$*. New York Public Interest Research Group, 1997: 1. (Back to text)

⁵ *Rethinking SUNY*. December 1, 1995.

⁶ "SUNY Chancellor: Quality Will Not Be Undermined" (press release), SUNY Office of University Relations, February 9, 1996.

⁷ *Ibid.*

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State support to SUNY's operating budget dropped from 90% in 1988 to 45% in 1996.⁸ In "Rethinking SUNY," a plan submitted to the New York State legislature in December 1995, the new trustees called for SUNY to become "more self-sufficient, more entrepreneurial, more focused and more creative." In a statement issued together with the heads of other New York State universities, SUNY's new chancellor John Ryan explained: "Just as the businesses and industries we support must be flexible to meet the constantly changing demands of the economic and academic marketplace, so must our own institutions be given the managerial and financial flexibility to operate effectively and efficiently."⁹

"Financial flexibility" suits Chancellor Ryan. During his first year in office, the trustees gave Ryan a 45% raise, bringing his salary to twice that of the governor.¹⁰ SUNY presidents were given pay-for-performance salary packages and will be paid according to how they carry out the new agenda.¹¹ The incentives are not strictly personal; campuses will receive extra funds for increasing teaching productivity.

Touting "greater management autonomy" and "empowerment" for individual campuses, Pataki's appointees recently attempted to introduce variable tuition rates at SUNY campuses. While these currently exist only at SUNY's two-year technical colleges, the aim is clearly to extend them. A new "operating freedom" is the right to name buildings and grounds after living individuals. Instead of honoring the deceased, SUNY now honors the highest bidder.

The trustees also granted such "freedoms" as waivers for five community colleges to exceed their annual tuition limit, and permission for individual campuses to set their own dormitory rates.¹² They attempted to introduce "management flexibility" for SUNY's teaching hospitals to enable them to compete in today's managed care environment. These initiatives are fragmenting SUNY and are eroding broad and equal access to higher education in New York.

In the latest SUNY budget, adopted in June 1998, the trustees determined that colleges will no longer receive funds solely from a central budget, and will keep their own tuition and fees. SUNY's new financing scheme is called "Resource Allocation Methodology" (RAM). Previously, colleges received funds according to their purpose, mission and need. Today, student enrollment and market-driven imperatives determine campus budgets. Nineteen SUNY campuses stand to lose funding because of RAM and will have to either cut programs or raise mandated student fees, which now average \$485.¹³ The fees, which are not covered by TAP, are a covert means of introducing variable campus tuition.

In a 1999 study on RAM, Thomas Kriger observes:

RAM must be understood in the context of the managerial reform movement that is currently transforming the world of higher education budgeting. These reforms mark the influence of a new generation of more conservative, "activist," university trustees. They also illustrate the widening influence of neoclassical economics (an emphasis on competition, the maximization of self-interest as a prime factor in human behavior, the primacy of profit as a value in human interactions) on higher education policy making As with RAM, performance funding is a method for SUNY to gain greater managerial control -or flexibility in the consultants' language-in the workplace. It is not by coincidence that SUNY's recent move toward performance-based

⁸ "Sommer Leaving Trustee Post With Concerns for SUNY," *Inside Binghamton*. September 11, 1997.

⁹ "State University Chancellor and University Presidents Emphasize the Importance of Higher Education to New York" (SUNY press release), February 26, 1997.

¹⁰ "\$77,600 Raise Proposed for SUNY's Chancellor," *Metro News Briefs, New York Times*, October 29, 1997: B2.

¹¹ "State University Trustees Adopt Presidential Pay-For-Performance Salary Plan" (SUNY press release), November 18, 1997.

¹² "State University Trustees Approve Five Community College Tuition Cap Waivers" (SUNY press release), October 28, 1997.

¹³ "UUP President Charges SUNY Trustees' Plan Cuts 19 Campuses by \$1 5.9 million" (UUP news release), June 29, 1998.

funding is associated with RAM; both originate in the Total Quality Management (TQM) movement.

These developments underscore a growing sense of crisis among SUNY faculty. From 1994 to 1996, SUNY lost 1,597 full-time professors-14% of its faculty.¹⁴ SUNY adjuncts now teach 40% of SUNY's courses.¹⁵ Tenure at SUNY, already eroded by the growing use of part-timers, is further threatened by SUNY's investments in distance learning technology. In the past two years, the SUNY Learning Network has tripled the number of courses it offers through the Internet. SUNY faculty may see their control over the curriculum diminished by the increasing use of distance learning.

Faculty recruitment at SUNY is in decline. In 1990, SUNY outbid 80% of the nations' colleges and universities in the salaries it offered to new faculty; by 1996, SUNY could only outbid 40%.¹⁶ SUNY faculty went without a contract from 1995 to 1997. Negotiations stalled when the faculty union, United University Professionals (UUP), refused to allow outsourcing of faculty positions to corporations.

As SUNY shifts from full to part-time labor, it is also undergoing changes in the education it provides. Federal and state tax dollars, not to mention student tuition, are flowing into technology centers such as the Center for Environmental Sciences and Technology Management. The aim, says SUNY Albany President Karen Hitchcock, is "to help move the best ideas of university researchers into the marketplace."¹⁷ SUNY has increased matching funds for sponsored research at its colleges. A new budget initiative for 1999-2000, "SMART-NY," would match sponsored research funding with SUNY money. Meanwhile, traditional disciplines are being scaled back.

The corporate presence takes different forms at more liberal arts-oriented schools like SUNY Geneseo. "You won't see as much corporate-sponsored research here as you would at, say SUNY Binghamton or Albany," says Jay Hamilton, an assistant professor in the Department of Communications at SUNY Geneseo. "Instead, many of our learning resources are corporate sponsored."¹⁸

The school, like most throughout the nation, receives equipment that has been donated by large corporations in exchange for what Hamilton describes as "an increased corporate presence on campus." Last fall semester, Hamilton says, Kodak supplied his department with three low-line digital cameras. In exchange, Kodak was permitted to provide a presentation to the communications students. "There were probably about 100 people there," Hamilton says. "What I thought was going to be a discussion about new technology and advancements in the field turned into a bald-faced sales presentation for Kodak products."

Last year, the Department of Communications at SUNY Geneseo reduced its five tracks of study to two combined tracks. During her senior year Maria Lambert, an organizing director for the Student Association of the State University of New York (SASU) and recent graduate of SUNY Geneseo, had her track, rhetorical studies, eliminated from the department.

"I still graduated with rhetorical studies on my diploma, but I never had a chance to take a number of courses that were part of that track," she says. "Instead I had to enroll in lower-level

¹⁴ SUNY Faculty Union Documents Salary Slippage, Faculty Exodus" (UUP press release), April 21, 1997.

¹⁵ William E. Scheuerman. "The Exploitation of Part-timers" (UUP news release), November 6, 1997.

¹⁶ "SUNY Faculty Union," *op. cit.*

¹⁷ Governor Pataki Lauds New Research Center at the University at Albany (SUNY press release), June 30, 1997.

¹⁸ All quotations without footnotes are from interviews conducted in spring 1998.

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courses for additional information." Lambert says even the threat that low-enrollment majors may be eliminated has a "chilling effect" on campus because students are fearful of enrolling in majors that may not exist in the next academic year.

Bruce Van Hise, executive director of college advancement at SUNY Brockport, where only 3% of outside funding comes from private sources, says a "significant increase" in corporate funding can be expected in the next ten years. Still, Van Hise, who was involved in raising private funds for the new Bausch and Lomb Public Library, says he has never "experienced any pressure from private sources who donate funds." "For us to change our organization to raise funds would be improper and foolish," says Van Hise.

At SUNY Old Westbury, a four-year college on Long Island, the administration eliminated French language instruction, faculty positions for the writing center, the program in English as a Second Language, and the college's unique performing arts program in African- American music and dance. The number of full time faculty declined from 146 in `89-90 to 107 in `96-97, leading to a steep rise in the student-faculty ratio, from 22.2 in `89-90 to 30.2 in `95-96.¹⁹

SUNY's research universities are also being restructured. Last year, SUNY Albany's administration closed down the German department, fired its four tenured professors, and merged the French department into a newly created Modern European Languages department. It simultaneously hired nineteen new professors in other disciplines as part of what it called a "strategy of investment in strength." Invariably, strong disciplines are those that engage in corporate sponsored research.

In an open letter in the November 7, 1997 *Albany Student Press*, French professor Helen Regueiro Elam wrote that the SUNY Albany administration "has transformed the university into a country club . . . with utter disregard for intellectual values, pedagogical priorities, or the larger role of a university in a democratic culture." Students at SUNY Albany, she believes, are becoming processors of information rather than critical thinkers, as corporations increasingly dictate SUNY's curriculum.²⁰

Another critic of recent developments at SUNY Albany, English professor Teresa Ebert, described in an essay the economic pressures on humanities departments, which include "cutting their budgets, limiting new hiring, increasing the teaching loads of their faculty, suspending admissions to their graduate programs or eliminating them altogether, and substituting part-time contingent knowledge workers for full-time positions."

These pressures will jeopardize more than the well-being of SUNY. As Ebert points out, educational issues are at "the very matrix of the forces shaping citizenship, and affect the shape of labor relations, the structure of the distribution of wealth and access, and the very forms of daily life."²¹

Errol Schweizer, a SUNY Binghamton senior who edits the student publication *Off!*, describes the formidable obstacles to activism at SUNY. "I think even worse than the apathy," he says, "is the anomie, the profound alienation that we all feel towards our culture, towards one another." There is a growing sense of powerlessness, says Schweizer, "as more people get shoved by

¹⁹ "Trends in FTE Faculty and SFR," Figure No. 6, Presidential Review Report (report of SUNY Old Westbury's Presidential Review Preparation Committee), February 21, 1997.

²⁰ Helen Regueiro Elam. "Open Letter to President Karen Hitchcock and Faculty at SUNY Albany," *Albany Student Press*. November 7, 1997: 1.

²¹ Teresa L. Ebert. "Quango-ing the University," *Alternative Orange*. Summer/Fall 1997: 5, 7.

the wayside, and as the gains by the middle class and the unions during the '50s and '60s slowly get rolled back."

Students have difficulty imagining alternatives to the system that conditions their very thinking. As Ralph Nader observed during an October 1996 talk at SUNY Binghamton, "We have to imagine the manufacturing of suppressed imagination is part of the consequence of growing up corporate, growing up looking at the world through the eyes of the dominant institution of society."²²

The changes at SUNY affect Schweizer, who hails from the Bronx, in a personal way. "Although I can pay for school," he says, "I have siblings who may not be able to because of the constant tuition increases, because of the privatization and the neoliberalization of the academy that is really making it hard for urban, working class people to pay for school."

SUNY Binghamton's fading public identity is symbolized by its recent name change to "Binghamton University." The transition from state-supported to state-assisted university is having lasting repercussions. "Departments in the humanities are being drastically scaled back as part of the Rethinking SUNY plan," notes Jennifer Lutzenburger, a graduate student in English. "Our university . . . is being shifted to a business and vocationally-oriented center. The English department received two funding lines [for two faculty positions] to replace the eight faculty members we have lost and are planning to lose through retirement. There is no indication from the dean that we will receive more lines."

This story is being repeated elsewhere. At Monroe Community College (MCC), the faculty and staff voted last year to allow increases in class sizes, reduced salary raises, and fewer earned vacation days in order to avert layoffs.²³ With state subsidies in decline, MCC recently entered into partnership with the optics industry and the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, a key player in nuclear weapons development.

Pataki's tuition hikes, budget cuts and appointments dismayed many who remembered and cherished SUNY's early years. Among them was Samuel Gould, who headed the SUNY system from 1964 to 1971, when its enrollment doubled.

In October 1995, Gould, in retirement in Florida, called his former assistant, John Mather and urged, "Drive the Vandals from the gates." A month later, Mather responded by founding Preservation of SUNY, which now includes fifteen former SUNY trustees, fourteen former campus presidents, and twenty-four former university administrators as well as alumni, students, businessmen and former state officials.²⁴ Mather has published op-ed pieces in the *Legislative Gazette*, the *Albany Times-Union*, and the *Binghamton Sun and Press Bulletin*, taking the SUNY trustees to task for abrogating their responsibilities to the university system.

John Mather regards himself as both an idealist and a pragmatist, and has set out to defend the public stake in SUNY. He opposes the decision to fire 300 administrators at SUNY Central Administration, a move he believes will cause SUNY's sixty-four campuses to duplicate their functions with a proliferation of local administrators. Mather is troubled by what he calls the "RAM scam," by the cuts to the Tuition Assistance Program, and by attempts to eliminate the Equal Opportunity Program (EOP), a program for disadvantaged students that Mather, then a SUNY official, helped create in 1966.

²² Jackie S. Yoo. "Nader Urges Battle Against 'Corporation'," *Inside Binghamton*. October 31, 1996.

²³ Michael Wentzel. "MCC Facing Agony of Change," *Democrat and Chronicle*. June 8, 1997: 4A.

²⁴ "The Preservation of the State University of New York Association," *The Legislative Gazette*. May 18, 1998: 28.

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Maple Sweeney, a New York City native and International Relations senior at SUNY Brockport, says she wouldn't be at Brockport if it weren't for EOP. "I am qualified," says Sweeney. "I have the grades. I just don't have the means. It's unfortunate that my mother doesn't have a lot of money, but people of misfortune need help reaching their potential. If the cuts to EOP continue, people like me won't even be able to consider coming to Brockport."

Many SUNY students feel the same way. Student debt is on the rise. Between 1990 and 1995, there was a 65% increase in the amount of federal loans owed by SUNY graduates.²⁵ Among Mather's allies is SASU, which brought 15,000 students and their supporters to Albany on February 15, 1995 for SUNY's lobbying day. SASU organized a protest at State Senator Joseph Bruno's 1997 graduation speech at SUNY Albany. Last year, SASU initiated a letter-writing campaign in an effort to persuade legislators to restore SUNY's funding.²⁶

This sort of activism is becoming a necessary part of SUNY campus life. Students at SUNY Geneseo hold an annual, week-long "Budget Advocacy" campaign, where they distribute information about state budget cuts, organize letter-writing campaigns to legislators, and hold a rally. This past academic year, students at SUNY Geneseo focused on making the public aware of tuition increases and cutbacks in TAP and EOP.

Over the past four years, as state funding of EOP has diminished, students at SUNY Brockport launched a letter-writing campaign and lobbied in Albany. Nearly 8,000 letters were sent from the Brockport campus to state legislators, and EOP was restored to three-fourths of its initial operating level, says SUNY Brockport EOP Director Terrence Barnes. Students continued to lobby for the final 25% of funding, which passed the legislature but was ultimately vetoed by Pataki.²⁷

Mather hopes that the lobbying efforts of SASU, together with growing public awareness of SUNY's importance, will reverse the neglect and abuse of the university system. "Before Pataki became governor in '95, appointees checked their corporate connections at the door," said Mather in a recent interview. "They functioned independently in the discharge of their fiduciary responsibilities, recognizing that the shareholders of SUNY are the people of New York." As Mather sees it, SUNY's new trustees "believe in a stratified society in which there is a permanent underclass."

From his perspective as a former SUNY administrator in the '60s, Mather is dismayed at the attitudes of today's public officials. Governor Nelson Rockefeller, Mather recalls, placed full trust in SUNY administrators says Mather, and would not attempt to influence their decisions. That trust has evaporated under Pataki, who has placed Republican operatives in key administrative positions at SUNY.

Donald Dunn, a First Deputy to the Governor, was appointed Executive Vice Chancellor without a search for the position. David Farren, the husband of New York State Health Commissioner Barbara DeBuono, was appointed Associate Vice Chancellor for Marketing and Enrollment Management. David Bilett, a former staff member of John Faso, the Republican Assembly Minority Leader, was named Associate Vice Chancellor for Governmental Relations. Michael Clemente, a former assistant to Jim Natoli, Pataki's Director of State Operations, was named the General Manager of SUNY's Construction Fund.²⁸

²⁵ "SUNY, CUNY Students Face Rising Debt," *New York Teacher*. April 7, 1997: 4A.

²⁶ Gladys Alcedo. "Students Turn Their Backs on Bruno," *The Daily Gazette*. May 19, 1997: B1.

²⁷ Chad Oliveiri contributed these paragraphs on SUNY Brockport and SUNY Geneseo.

²⁸ "Top Pataki Aide Nominated for No. 2 Post at SUNY" (Associated Press), *The Legislative Gazette*. May 19, 1997: 2.

In May 1997, Vincent Aceto, president of the SUNY Faculty Senate, expressed his concern to the trustees that "a subtle, but pervasive, political litmus test is being used to appoint personnel at SUNY System Administration."²⁹ The appointment of Peter Salins as SUNY's new provost was, however, none too subtle. Salins is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, a well-funded right-wing think tank.

It had become increasingly apparent that the trustees were loyal not to SUNY but to the man who appointed them. In a June 28, 1998 letter to Chancellor Ryan, UUP President William Scheuerman wrote that SUNY's trustees were the "leaders of the only public university system in the nation in 1997-98 not to request a budget increase."³⁰

Recently, the state legislature passed a bill to guarantee that at least four of SUNY's sixteen trustees would be SUNY alumni. The assumption was that alumni would act in the best interests of SUNY and temper the agenda of political appointees. Pataki, however, vetoed the legislation. With SUNY administrators often appointed without searches, affirmative action guidelines waived throughout the system, and plans underway to place all SUNY research under the auspices of the SUNY Research Foundation (where public disclosure laws do not apply), the need for public dialogue and accountability at SUNY increases.

To this end, Mather has introduced a "Magna Carta" for SUNY, outlined in a six page supplement to the *Legislative Gazette*. (The original Magna Carta, extracted by the barons of England from King John in 1215, guaranteed civil liberties for the English people.) Preservation of SUNY will soon convene a panel to inform the public as to the actions and voting records of SUNY's trustees.

SUNY's Magna Carta would insure that trustees owe their full loyalty to SUNY and act consistently in its interest. It states that SUNY "belongs to all the people of the Empire State," that the politicization of SUNY "is disserving of public higher education requirements in the preservation of a democratic society," that SUNY must comply with federal and state regulations, including those regarding affirmative action, and that SUNY "is an entity at law, not subject to actions that would fragment or dismantle it."³¹

Many hoped that the record \$2 billion surplus in the 1998 New York State budget, would improve SUNY's fortunes, which had been subjected to fifteen consecutive budget cuts. In April 1998, Pataki vetoed many of the state legislature's appropriations for SUNY, including an \$8.8 million increase to hire new faculty, a \$3.8 million EOP restoration, a \$150 per student increase in state aid to community colleges, and a \$65 per student book purchase credit for public college students.³²

Matters came to a head on December 15, 1998, when the trustees approved a SUNY core curriculum, effective fall 2000. Four trustees, working with two administrators, had drafted the curriculum without consulting the Faculty Senate, campus presidents, or other trustees.

Earlier, in January 1998, the Faculty Senate had sent the trustees a policy report on general education which had been endorsed by all campus presidents and faculty senates. The senate's request to discuss the report with the trustees was ignored.³³ The vote on the new

²⁹ Vincent Aceto. "Testimony Delivered to SUNY Board of Trustees," May 28, 1997, SUNY Faculty Senate Bulletin 1997-98, No. 2, Appendix H: 3.

³⁰ William E. Scheuerman. Letter to John W. Ryan, June 29, 1998: 3.

³¹ "The SUNY Magna Carta," *The Legislative Gazette*. May 18, 1998: 25.

³² "Students Outraged at the Latest Pataki Attack" (SASU press release), April 27, 1998.

³³ Vincent Aceto. "SUNY Faculty Wants A Say In Curriculum," *Albany Times-Union*. April 22, 1999: A15.

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curriculum took place at a time when the faculty were busy grading papers. Details of the proposed curriculum had been faxed to the trustees less than a week before. The few professors who turned up at the December 15 meeting were not allowed to comment until after the trustees had finished voting.

The hastily passed curriculum, consisting of ten courses in different subject areas, might have benefitted from faculty advice. A month after the passage of the core curriculum, campus presidents met with SUNY administrators to inform them that there were not enough faculty to teach the mandated core curriculum, since faculty lines depended on the number of student majors in a particular subject. Chancellor Ryan, however, declined to promise the presidents more resources.

The new curriculum made little pedagogical sense. Most SUNY campuses already had rigorous core curricula. Jane Altes, the interim president of Empire State College, observed that a single course in a foreign language or a science, consisting of three credit hours, "has no academic meaning."³⁴ Justyna Berger, a SUNY Albany senior wondered: "How valuable is one course in foreign language or math? In my experience, taking so few courses in such a wide variety of disciplines has no lasting intellectual impact."³⁵

Pataki's appointees had usurped the role of the faculty in determining SUNY's curriculum. As the policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees state: "The University faculty shall be responsible for the conduct of the University's instruction."

What followed was the most massive professors' revolt in SUNY history. In April 1999, the Faculty Senate joined with the SUNY faculty union to declare "no-confidence" in the trustees and to ask the governor to remove them.

Their joint resolution censures the Board of Trustees for, among other things, "failing to conduct fair and open searches for the most senior administrative positions in the University and disregarding affirmative action guidelines," "allowing ideological views to dictate the academic direction of the University," "failing to advocate for strong financial support for the University," "seeking to significantly disrupt the public mission of high quality health care delivery to the people of the State of New York by attempting to remove State University of New York's teaching hospitals from the University," and "violating its own policies by imposing a mandated general education policy for all campuses without the direct involvement of legitimate faculty representatives, chief academic officers, or presidents."

The faculty addressed the governor, legislature and the people of New York: "Never before have we so spoken and we do so now only from the deep conviction that the University is in a time of great jeopardy."

Shortly afterwards, in a April 5, 1999 letter to the trustees, Chancellor Ryan wrote: "All of us are engaged in a renaissance of the State University that is both challenging and, at times, contentious. But we cannot step back from the challenge simply because some people are made uncomfortable by change."

In a similar letter to the campus presidents, Ryan stated that the Faculty Senate appeared to be "trading its historic and collegial role as a vital participant in University governance for the adversarial role inherent in the union-management contract-negotiation process," adding that if the Faculty Senate came "to be viewed as a part of the union-representing individual faculty

³⁴ Andrew Brownstein. "SUNY Mandate Under Fire," *Albany Times-Union*. January 30, 1999: A1, A4.

³⁵ Justyna N. Berger. "SUNY's Core Curriculum Misguided," *Albany Times-Union*. March 15, 1999.

members, and not as the scholarly and academic representative of the faculty as a whole," then the administration would have to "review the role of the Senate in a much different light."³⁶ On April 20, professors throughout SUNY wore black armbands in protest.

In his 1999-2000 budget, Pataki proposed a \$133 million cut in TAP, which would result in a \$510 reduction in the maximum award to SUNY students-which now covers only 26% of tuition. He also proposed reducing TAP eligibility at community colleges from six to four semesters and requiring students to take at least fifteen credits instead of twelve in order to maintain their TAP eligibility.³⁷ In June 1999, Pataki completed his stacking of the SUNY trustee board with the addition of Bernard Conners, an Albany businessman and former FBI agent.

The New York legislature, after record delay, has just passed its budget. Most of Pataki's cuts to higher education have been rescinded, although specifics are not yet available. What is clear is that SUNY will spend \$3 billion during the next five years for campus construction projects, an agenda that Vincent Tirelli, a labor organizer at the City University of New York, describes as "a neutron bomb in reverse," since it builds buildings but doesn't put people in them.

That kind of planning may please construction firms, many of which contribute to Pataki's campaign, but will do little for the students for whom Nelson Rockefeller had vowed in 1969 to preserve SUNY as "the open gateway to opportunity in American life."³⁸

³⁶ "Leaders of SUNY Senate and Faculty Union Want SUNY Board to Resign," *New York Academe*. Spring 1999:3.

³⁷ Eileen Burchell. "NYSC-AAUP Testifies Vs. Pataki's Proposed Cuts in Higher Ed Budget," *New York Academe*. Spring 1999: 1.

³⁸ "Opportunity Cost\$: 3," *Albany Times-Union*. April 22, 1999: A15.