

# STATE OF NEW YORK

2274

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

## IN SENATE

January 16, 2025

Introduced by Sens. GOUNARDES, BAILEY, BRISPORT, BROUK, CLEARE, COMRIE, FERNANDEZ, GIANARIS, GONZALEZ, HARCKHAM, HOYLMAN-SIGAL, JACKSON, KAVANAGH, LIU, MYRIE, PARKER, PERSAUD, RAMOS, RIVERA, SALAZAR, SCARCELLA-SPANTON, SEPULVEDA, SERRANO, STAVISKY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Higher Education

AN ACT to amend the education law and the state finance law, in relation to enacting The New Deal for CUNY

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Short title. This enacts "The New Deal for CUNY".  
2 § 2. Legislative intent. The Legislature hereby recognizes the need  
3 for The New Deal for CUNY to ensure that the commitment the Legislature  
4 articulated in establishing the city university of New York is extended  
5 to present and future generations. The 1961 legislation recognized that  
6 the creation of a city university as a single unified system was "justi-  
7 fied" by the special needs of a multi-racial urban constituency and the  
8 "vital importance" of creating opportunities for disadvantaged New York-  
9 ers. Those needs have only grown in the half-century since the Legisla-  
10 ture's action. Yet CUNY's ability to fulfill them has diminished as  
11 enrollment has skyrocketed and investment has failed to keep pace. The  
12 New Deal for CUNY reimagines CUNY as the vital urban university it must  
13 be if it is to serve the people of New York. It enhances CUNY's historic  
14 role as a leader in educational justice and economic transformation.  
15 This legislation restores free tuition, ensures adequate faculty staff-  
16 ing, and aligns student support with nationally recommended standards.  
17 In doing so, The New Deal for CUNY restores New York to national leader-  
18 ship in public higher education and removes the barriers to student  
19 success that have prevented thousands of CUNY students from realizing  
20 the full potential of a college degree. The New Deal for CUNY gradually  
21 increases the ratio of students to full-time faculty at CUNY to

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD03187-01-5

1 nationally recommended levels, with a special emphasis on racial and  
2 ethnic diversity in hiring. It also replaces the system of underpayment  
3 for contingent faculty with a dignified labor system that provides  
4 students with the support they urgently need. CUNY students, perhaps  
5 more than any other college population in the country, bear stresses  
6 that make it extraordinarily difficult to stay in college, sometimes  
7 even to survive. The New Deal for CUNY addresses the urgent need for  
8 student support by gradually escalating the hiring of mental health and  
9 other counselors to bring CUNY into line with national standards. The  
10 New Deal for CUNY mandates that all tuition and student fees for  
11 in-state undergraduate students within specified time frames for  
12 completion of degree be eliminated, and that the revenue to the colleges  
13 that would otherwise derive from tuition and fees be replaced annually  
14 by federal, state, and city funds.

15 § 3. Subdivision A of section 6221 of the education law is amended by  
16 adding a new paragraph 4-b to read as follows:

17 4-b. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, rule or regulation to  
18 the contrary, subject to amounts made available by appropriation,  
19 commencing in the two thousand twenty-seven--two thousand twenty-eight  
20 academic year, the city university shall be entitled to annually receive  
21 one hundred percent reimbursement for the annual cost of tuition and  
22 student fees for each matriculated undergraduate student at a city  
23 university senior college and community college who is enrolled in  
24 credit-bearing academic coursework and is on track to graduate. The  
25 state comptroller shall establish a separate fund for such monies to be  
26 distributed to the city university of New York. The city university  
27 shall receive an amount equal to the full cost of in-state undergraduate  
28 tuition and student fees for each qualifying, matriculated student who  
29 successfully completes credit-bearing academic coursework and is on  
30 track to graduate. The full cost of tuition shall not include any addi-  
31 tional funds the student may receive from any other New York state or  
32 federal grant, award, or scholarship program. The deposit of these funds  
33 shall be utilized as first dollar awards to the students at the city  
34 university. Any student not successfully completing credit-bearing  
35 academic coursework in a semester shall still be eligible to receive all  
36 other grants, awards, and scholarships for which they qualify but shall  
37 not be eligible for the tuition and student fee reimbursement described  
38 herein. Students shall be eligible to receive a one semester exemption  
39 from the requirement to complete credit-bearing academic coursework for  
40 such tuition reimbursement as promulgated by the higher education  
41 services corporation. Such exemption shall not preclude any student from  
42 exercising their right to appeal pursuant to higher education services  
43 corporation policy. The state comptroller shall deposit such monies with  
44 the city university no later than thirty days after the start of the  
45 semester.

46 § 4. Section 6206 of the education law is amended by adding three new  
47 subdivisions 24, 25 and 26 to read as follows:

48 24. Each community college and senior college of the city university  
49 of New York shall maintain, at a minimum, a ratio of one clinical, non-  
50 student mental health staff member per one thousand students. Within two  
51 years of the effective date of this subdivision, each community and  
52 senior college shall establish, and require a meeting of, a board of  
53 advisors having expertise in the area of clinical mental health  
54 services. The advisory boards shall, using current data, update and  
55 modify, as necessary, such ratios based on actual ratios in this state  
56 and any new information related to appropriate benchmarks for clini-

1 cian-to-student ratios. Data collected by the advisory boards may be  
2 used as a means to increase the number of mental health staff members.  
3 In no event shall the ratio fall below one clinical, non-student mental  
4 health staff member per one thousand students. Following the initial  
5 meeting, advisory boards shall meet once every five years. This subdivi-  
6 sion shall not be funded by student tuition or fees created on or after  
7 the effective date of this subdivision. Community colleges and senior  
8 colleges in the city university of New York may seek federal funding or  
9 private grants, if available, to further expand and support the  
10 provisions of this subdivision. Any faculty and staff hired through the  
11 assistance of federal funding or private grants pursuant to this subdivi-  
12 vision shall be treated and classified as full-time public employees and  
13 covered under any collectively bargained contracts in their respective  
14 bargaining units. The city university shall report annually, on July  
15 first, to the chair of the senate finance committee, the chair of the  
16 assembly ways and means committee, the chair of the senate higher educa-  
17 tion committee, and the chair of the assembly higher education committee  
18 on the following criteria:

19 a. the ratio of clinical and non-student mental health staff employed  
20 and what that number equates to per student;

21 b. the number of full-time mental health staff, and number of part-  
22 time mental health staff per campus, including those who may not possess  
23 the title mental health staff but are primarily employed to perform and  
24 carry out the duties typically assigned to, and function as, mental  
25 health staff; and

26 c. the mean and median number of students receiving services per  
27 campus in the two thousand twenty-seven--two thousand twenty-eight  
28 academic year and in the academic year in which the report is prepared  
29 from full-time mental health staff, and from part-time academic advi-  
30 sors.

31 25. Commencing in the two thousand twenty-seven--two thousand twenty-  
32 eight academic year each community college and senior college of the  
33 city university of New York shall maintain a minimum academic staffing  
34 ratio of forty-five full-time faculty members per one thousand full-time  
35 equivalent students. Commencing in the two thousand twenty-eight--two  
36 thousand twenty-nine academic year each community college and senior  
37 college of the city university of New York shall maintain a minimum  
38 academic staffing ratio of fifty full-time faculty members per one thou-  
39 sand full-time equivalent students. Commencing in the two thousand  
40 twenty-nine--two thousand thirty academic year each community college  
41 and senior college of the city university of New York shall maintain a  
42 minimum academic staffing ratio of fifty-five full-time faculty members  
43 per one thousand full-time equivalent students. Commencing in the two  
44 thousand thirty--two thousand thirty-one academic year each community  
45 college and senior college of the city university of New York shall  
46 maintain a minimum academic staffing ratio of sixty full-time faculty  
47 members per one thousand full-time equivalent students. Commencing in  
48 the two thousand thirty-one--two thousand thirty-two academic year and  
49 each year thereafter, each community college and senior college of the  
50 city university of New York shall maintain a minimum academic staffing  
51 ratio of sixty-five full-time faculty members per one thousand full-time  
52 equivalent students. This subdivision shall not be funded by student  
53 fees created on or after the effective date of this subdivision. Any  
54 faculty or staff hired through the assistance of federal funding or  
55 private grants pursuant to this subdivision shall be treated and classi-  
56 fied as full-time public employees and covered under any collectively

1 bargained contracts in their respective bargaining units. The city  
2 university shall utilize national searches to ensure recruitment of  
3 diverse faculty from underrepresented racial, ethnic, and gender groups,  
4 and prioritize the creation of full-time faculty positions for adjunct  
5 faculty currently employed by the university in order to meet the mini-  
6 imum academic staffing ratios described herein. The city university shall  
7 report annually, on July first, to the chair of the senate finance  
8 committee, the chair of the assembly ways and means committee, the chair  
9 of the senate higher education committee, and the chair of the assembly  
10 higher education committee. The report shall include, but not be limited  
11 to, the following criteria:

12 a. data that indicates whether the city university is in compliance  
13 with the mandatory minimum academic staffing ratios established pursuant  
14 to this subdivision;

15 b. the number by campus, in the two thousand twenty-seven--two thou-  
16 sand twenty-eight academic year and in the academic year in which the  
17 report is prepared, of each full-time tenured faculty, full-time  
18 tenure-track faculty, full-time non-tenure track faculty, including  
19 those who may not have a faculty or academic job title but perform  
20 instructional duties and number of faculty lines and unfilled faculty  
21 positions;

22 c. the mean and median class size by campus in the two thousand twen-  
23 ty-seven--two thousand twenty-eight academic year and in the academic  
24 year in which the report is prepared, for full-time tenured faculty,  
25 full-time tenure-track faculty, and full-time non-tenure track faculty  
26 and instructional staff;

27 d. the mean and median class size by level for remedial one hundred  
28 level introductory courses, and two hundred level mid-level courses and  
29 above for completion of an associate degree and baccalaureate degree in  
30 the two thousand twenty-seven--two thousand twenty-eight academic year  
31 and in the academic year in which the report is prepared;

32 e. the number of part-time non-tenure track faculty in the two thou-  
33 sand twenty-seven--two thousand twenty-eight academic year and in the  
34 academic year in which the report is prepared, including those who may  
35 not have a faculty or academic job title but perform instructional  
36 duties, by campus; and

37 f. the mean and median class size by campus for part-time non-tenure  
38 track faculty and instructional staff in the two thousand twenty-seven-  
39 -two thousand twenty-eight academic year and in the academic year in  
40 which the report is prepared.

41 26. Commencing in the two thousand twenty-seven--two thousand twenty-  
42 eight academic year each community college and senior college of the  
43 city university of New York shall maintain, at a minimum, a ratio of one  
44 academic advisor per six hundred full-time equivalent students. Commenc-  
45 ing in the two thousand twenty-eight--two thousand twenty-nine academic  
46 year, the minimum staffing ratio for academic advisors at each community  
47 college and senior college of the city university of New York shall be  
48 one academic advisor per every four hundred full-time equivalent  
49 students. Commencing in the two thousand twenty-nine--two thousand thir-  
50 ty academic year, the minimum staffing ratio for academic advisors at  
51 each community college and senior college of the city university of New  
52 York shall be one academic advisor for every three hundred full-time  
53 equivalent students. Commencing in the two thousand thirty--two thousand  
54 thirty-one academic year, and every year thereafter, the minimum staff-  
55 ing ratio for academic advisors at each community college and senior  
56 college of the city university of New York shall be one academic advisor

1 for every two hundred fifty students. This subdivision shall not be  
2 funded by student tuition or fees created on or after its effective  
3 date. Community colleges and senior colleges in the city university of  
4 New York may seek federal funding or private grants, if available, to  
5 further expand and support the provisions of this subdivision. Any  
6 faculty and staff hired through the assistance of federal funding or  
7 private grants pursuant to this subdivision shall be treated and classi-  
8 fied as full-time public employees and covered under any collectively  
9 bargained contracts in their respective bargaining units. The city  
10 university shall report annually on July first to the chair of the  
11 senate finance committee, the chair of the assembly ways and means  
12 committee, the chair of the senate higher education committee, and the  
13 chair of the assembly higher education committee. The report shall  
14 include, but not be limited to, the following criteria:

15 a. whether the city university is in compliance with the mandatory  
16 minimum academic advisor staffing ratios established pursuant to this  
17 subdivision;

18 b. the number of full-time academic advisors per campus, and number of  
19 part-time academic advisors, including those who may not possess the  
20 title academic advisor but are primarily employed to perform and carry  
21 out the duties typically assigned to, and function as, an academic advi-  
22 sor; and

23 c. the mean and median number of student advisees, per full-time and  
24 part-time academic advisor per campus in the two thousand twenty-seven-  
25 -two thousand twenty-eight academic year and in the academic year in  
26 which the report is prepared.

27 § 5. The second undesignated paragraph of section 6220 of the educa-  
28 tion law is amended by adding a new subparagraph 16-a to read as  
29 follows:

30 16-a. Part-time and adjunct faculty shall receive wages and compen-  
31 sation equal to those in the lecturer title of this section based on  
32 comparable hours, duties and level of responsibility assigned to those  
33 in the title of lecturer. Commensurate increases in wages and compen-  
34 sation for adjunct faculty with professoriate titles shall correlate to  
35 the appropriate professor, associate professor, and assistant professor  
36 titles as bargained.

37 § 6. Section 22-c of the state finance law is amended by adding a new  
38 subdivision 7 to read as follows:

39 7. For the fiscal year beginning on April first, two thousand twenty-  
40 six and every fifth fiscal year thereafter, the governor shall submit to  
41 the legislature as part of the annual executive budget, five-year capi-  
42 tal plans for the state university of New York state operated campuses  
43 and city university of New York senior colleges. Such plans shall  
44 provide for the annual appropriation of capital funds to cover one  
45 hundred percent of the annual critical maintenance needs identified by  
46 each university system, and may include funds for new infrastructure or  
47 other major capital initiatives, provided that such funding for new  
48 infrastructure or other major capital initiatives shall not count  
49 towards meeting the overall critical maintenance requirement. In the  
50 event that such plan is unable to fund one hundred percent of the crit-  
51 ical maintenance needs due to the limitation imposed by article five-B  
52 of this chapter, the director of the budget shall develop five-year  
53 capital plans whereby the implementation of each capital plan would  
54 annually reduce the overall facility condition index for each university  
55 system. For the purposes of this subdivision, "facility condition index"  
56 shall mean an industry benchmark that measures the ratio of deferred

1 maintenance dollars to replacement dollars for the purposes of analyzing  
2 the effect of investing in facility improvements. The apportionment of  
3 capital appropriations to each state-operated campus or senior college  
4 shall be based on a methodology to be developed by the director of the  
5 budget, in consultation with the state university of New York and the  
6 city university of New York.

7 § 7. This act shall take effect immediately.