

From UUP post-budget legislative talking points, in support of NYS Senate and Assembly bills:

Transparency and Accountability

Reporting Legislation (S19B LaValle/A5379B Glick)

Purpose: To require the SUNY and CUNY Research Foundations and SUNY and CUNY campus foundations to produce an annual report to be published online. The report would include financial reports, contract information (including total number, amount, and vendors), total amount of employees (by department and job location), amount spent on personnel (by department and job location) and employee salaries, job titles and employee benefits.

Talking Points:

- Passage of this legislation will result in greater accountability and transparency for the SUNY/CUNY Research Foundation and campus foundations. These foundations exist to help carry out the public missions of their state agencies.
- These “shadow agencies” receive and spend millions of public dollars each year to advance the purposes and objectives of the state agencies they serve.
- SUNY’s research and campus foundations subsidize many highly paid administrators at SUNY campuses, in effect doubling (in some cases) the annual salaries of these public officials.
- Given the nature and scope of their activities, these foundations should be required to disclose their financial records fully and annually.
- The private foundations of the state’s public colleges and universities control net assets of about \$1.8 billion, of which hundreds of millions are expended without restrictions at the sole discretion of the foundations. These foundations spend without explicit guidelines or public oversight.
- SUNY foundations are members of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), which states that foundations “are not a vehicle for shielding information from the public,” and encourages foundations “to be as open with information as possible, especially as it pertains to expenditures and uses of funds.”
- Every public official in New York State talks about transparency. Yet, these foundations are not transparent, to the detriment of all students attending public universities today.

Financial Disclosure of SUNY Campus Foundation Employees (S491 LaValle/A5949 Glick)

Purpose: To make financial disclosure requirements for employees of SUNY campus foundations (including the SUNY Research Foundation) consistent with those required for state employees.

Talking Points:

- This legislation would require SUNY campus foundation and Research Foundation employees to fill out financial disclosure forms consistent with those required for SUNY employees.
- SUNY's campus foundations, in terms of function and payroll, have increasingly entered into areas (such as dormitories and continuing education) previously administered, operated and staffed by state employees.
- Although these foundation employees in many respects are carrying out public functions, the operations of these entities lack transparency.
- We oppose SUNY's increasing reliance on these private organizations and urge the passage of this bill to help provide transparency to the public.