

Higher Education Funding Talking Points

The way out of a recession is to support higher education.

Supporting higher education during a recession will make our State's economy stronger. When people are unemployed, they need access to higher education so they can upgrade their credentials and skills and emerge ready for a better job. People laid off from "old" jobs need higher education to seize the opportunity for the "new" jobs that are expected to emerge in an economic recovery.

Public Higher Ed has never received adequate support from the State

NJ's public colleges and universities have been chronically underfunded. This has been fully documented in a study commissioned by the Council done by New Jersey Policy Perspectives, entitled Flunking Out: New Jersey's Support for Higher Education Falls Short. NOTE: This report is available on the Council website.

Cutting the budget for public higher education will add to the jobless rate

National studies show that student enrollment actually rise during a recession. Cutting funding will deny access to a growing number of students who will join the ranks of the unemployed. Students already enrolled will find that the classes they need to graduate or to complete a certification are cancelled due to limited class offerings.

Cutting the budget for higher education will cause sharp increases in tuition

Tuition increases will drive some students in debt and deprive others from obtaining a college education altogether. This is not the direction our State should take.

Staffing of our institutions is already at critically low levels

Due to the chronic underfunding, senior public colleges and universities have attempted to economize by hiring more and more part-time and adjunct faculty. These low paid faculty attempt to piece together a livelihood by working at multiple institutions. This gives them little time to provide students with advisement and other services. The overall quality of the education suffers when the ranks of its full-time faculty are decimated.

In conclusion:

Public higher education is a key element to economic recovery. It is the path to upward social mobility for low and moderate income students. It promotes an active, engaged citizenry. Ensuring that public higher education remains accessible and affordable is critical to the future of New Jersey.