



**SUNY Stony Brook Center Chapter
Executive Board
Statement: Protect SUNY Stony Brook against Austerity
May 8, 2020**

It has been over a month since the Faculty, Staff, Graduate and Undergraduate students of SUNY Stony Brook rose to the challenges of the COVID-19 crisis. As educators, as researchers, as staff, as students, and as community members, we believe that our institution, SUNY Stony Brook, is a necessary public good that has responded to Governor Andrew Cuomo's call to assist and serve the people of New York in this pandemic.

Whereas SUNY Stony Brook is a public good that benefits the state of New York, the epicenter of the Coronavirus pandemic, we demand the administration of Interim President Michael A. Bernstein to be true to his vision of protecting "the well-being of our community" and for Incoming President Maurie McInnis to continue "growing a community of care" by rejecting cuts and layoffs.

We call upon the administration to commit to the following:

Protect all SUNY Stony Brook jobs. No reductions in wages and benefits. All SUNY Stony Brook workers, including student workers, faculty, and staff, are held harmless because without the workers, there IS no SUNY Stony Brook. We call upon the administration to work collaboratively with the unions, faculty, staff, and students to ensure no job losses, no loss of healthcare, and no reductions to other benefits. We call upon the admin to forge alliances with the unions, faculty, staff, and students to send a unified message to governing bodies in Albany and Washington, D.C. to fully fund public education.

Practice meaningful and consistent shared governance with the unions on campus, the University Senate, and other members of our campus community. SUNY Stony Brook faculty, staff and students should meaningfully participate in the determination of the conditions under which our University will be reopened and run, including the learning needs and expectations of our students, the resources necessary to serve them, and, in consultation with medical and public health experts, the health and safety of the community.

Use the unrestricted campus reserves to address the deficits projected for next school year (There are hundreds of millions in unrestricted campus reserves according to the Bunsis report). A SUNY Stony Brook education should be affordable for all New Yorkers and residents of the state. SUNY Stony Brook must also be fully funded by the state and federal governments without undue burdens of debt which limit our ability to grow and provide a rich array of resources and opportunities for all students. SBU must be committed to policies that eliminate existing student debt and provide robust, guaranteed, publicly funded systems of higher education that are available to all students.

Practice Transparency. The processes through which decisions are made and the data on which they are based must be entirely transparent. Most pressingly, this means making complete, itemized university budgets public. Any data on enrollments, revenues, growth or other relevant criteria must likewise be public. Only with full information and transparent procedures can faculty and staff meaningfully participate in determining budgetary priorities.

Protect the most vulnerable: Equitable does not mean identical. If the university were to make reductions to salaries, they should come first from management confidential, who are among the highest paid individuals at the institution. We should take special care to ensure the security of those who have the weakest job protections, the lowest salaries, and the most tenuous access to health benefits. Moreover, our University's strength is in the diversity of its programs; small units must be maintained alongside larger ones. Whether as the result of swift retrenchment or slow attrition, the loss of programs and units must be avoided at all costs.

Protect SUNY Stony Brook against privatization. As a necessary public good, we will push to ensure that local agreements and state policies reject any and all institutional closures or privatization schemes including, for example, the outsourcing of student services, the creation and expansion of privatized units on campus (such as the Research Foundation), or the increasingly many contracts with private entities to provide educational services to campus.

Affirm the importance of physical instruction and reject efforts to accelerate the transition to online programs, recognizing that online education is not optimal in many situations and furthermore, when inappropriately used, it can disadvantage students and erode the quality of education and the academic reputation of SUNY Stony Brook.