



NEW JERSEY

# Association of State Colleges and Universities

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## **NJASCU Comments on the:**

### ***Report of the Education, Access, and Opportunity Transition Advisory Committee***

February 9, 2018

#### **Free College Tuition Programs**

- Free college tuition programs share common fiscal, political, and policy related shortcomings. If only tuition is free, students must still find a way to pay for living expenses, transportation, books, supplies and other ancillary expenses like childcare.
- Subsidizing all students is not the most efficient use of government funding. Providing free tuition for all students, regardless of ability to pay, will divert financial support from economically disadvantaged students to those who are capable of paying all or a portion of their tuition.
- Also, several of the four-year public universities -- including New Jersey City University -- have come up with free tuition plans for those students who meet family income levels of \$60,000 or less.

#### **Other priorities in the report**

- *Improving credit transfer* between New Jersey higher education institutions, a priority of the report, is always a good idea. William Paterson University President Kathleen Waldron has been a champion of this concept as co-chair of NJ Presidents' Council's Transfer Committee. This strategy is one way that our four-year public institutions, working collaboratively with the state's community colleges, have come up with very creative partnerships that truly increase the affordability and accessibility of a four-year college education

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*The College of New Jersey  
Kean University  
Montclair State University*

*New Jersey City University  
Ramapo College of New Jersey  
Rowan University*

*Stockton University  
Thomas Edison State University  
William Paterson University*

- *A bachelor's degree is crucial* to the future of New Jersey's workforce: the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce has projected that 29 percent of the jobs in New Jersey will require a bachelor's degree – more than any other state in the nation.

### **Looking at the whole picture**

- *Address declining funding of the state colleges and universities* - over the past 25 years (FY 1991-FY2016) appropriations per FTE decreased by 40 percent at New Jersey's public colleges and universities and at the same time FTE enrollment increased from 164,366 to 268,296 students.
- It is crucial to have an *increase in operating support* to all public institutions. Operating support should be increased and a rational basis for higher education appropriations should be developed and implemented.
- With regard to financial aid, we need a *more equitable distribution of TAG funding* (money should follow the student rather than the institution) and an *ironclad commitment to EOF* (a progressive and successful program that has produced great leaders in NJ, including Lamont Repollet, nominee for NJ Commissioner of Education).
- To increase the cost-efficiency of the state colleges and universities, the State *must reform the burdensome State College Contracts Law*.
- *A consistent annual capital funding appropriation* also would help institutions reduce student fees and provide state-of-the-art facilities that our students and faculty deserve and need to succeed.