Dear NJASCU Colleagues/Friends:

Welcome to this week’s edition of NJASCU’s "Noteworthy" compilation of a feature story, advocacy report, and news item(s), reflecting the interests and happenings among New Jersey’s senior public colleges and universities. Some of our news articles are reprinted in full; most are summaries with the full article accessible by clicking on the headline.

We would love your feedback and suggestions. Please keep sending press releases, many of which will be included in our "Noteworthy" compilation.

Thank you,

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Budget Alert

**Budget FY 2020 Signed, No Shutdown, Some Line Item Vetoes, but Schools Essentially Retained their Funding Increases**

www.NJASCU.org

Gov. Phil Murphy on Sunday, June 30, enacted a $38.7 billion budget for the new fiscal year that begins July 1, 2019, but only after using the line-item veto to remove $48.5 million in legislative appropriations "Add Ons" sought by the lawmakers.

The governor also issued an executive order that will keep another "up to $235 million" in spending impounded in "reserve" as he waits to see how well state revenues perform during fiscal year 2020. On Sunday, June 30, 2019, no one knew yet the composition of this "in-reserve" list. But on Wednesday, July 3, 2019, the list was made public. And the public higher education community was significantly affected.

In the higher education funding category, the line-item vetoes included: $500,000 for a Rutgers-Camden Workforce and a reduction in the Legislature-requested Rowan...
University State Funded positions - the request was for 1,799 and the final number in the budget is 1,650.

The freeze includes: $7.5 million for Montclair State University; $12 million for Cooper Medical School of Rowan University; $2 million to Rowan University for Center for Research and Education in Advanced Transportation Engineering Systems; $3 million to the Rutgers/Rowan Joint Board RU Camden Business School; $4.6 million to Stockton University; $2.5 million for the Rutgers New Brunswick School of Engineering; and $1 million each to Ramapo College, Thomas Edison State University, The College of New Jersey and New Jersey City University.

The complete list includes many spending items supported by the Democratic-controlled state Legislature for local municipal projects, including transitional aid for Atlantic City.

The Free Community College Program will receive $30 million in the final budget, as opposed to the $58.5 million that Governor Murphy requested in his initial budget. In FY 2019, the program received $25 million.

But much of the appropriations bill that lawmakers sent to Governor Murphy remained intact following the governor’s action. That led Democratic legislative leaders in both houses to declare victory as the spending law became law. They also sent no signals that attempts to override the line-item vetoes are now looming in either house.

Even though not a direct higher education subsidy, the increase in NJ Transit funding is good news for the colleges and universities that rely on New Jersey’s mass transit network for its faculty and students. Governor Murphy accepted the Legislature’s request to add another $50 million to the state subsidy for New Jersey Transit operations, pushing that total to $457.5 million.

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**NJASCU Special News**

**NJCU President is Panelist at NJ Spotlight Roundtable - "Preparing High Schoolers for College and Career"**

**NJASCU QuickTakes**

In the second NJ Spotlight’s 2019 "Defining the Diploma" series of roundtables, the June 18 discussion looked at private and public sector job paths for New Jersey graduates. New Jersey City University President Sue Henderson was among the policy, college and business leaders addressing the issue of what skills graduates need to succeed beyond high school.

Since the movement for education standards and testing took off in the 1980s and 1990s, the issue has centered on what exactly students should know and be able to do to succeed beyond high school. But that has been a moving target. Especially in recent years, the skills and knowledge expected of high school graduates have shifted.

How are schools and the state dealing with these changing expectations? What are the consequences for students who go to college? And could there be a better connection
Gov. Phil Murphy characterized the state budget lawmakers sent him on June 18 as one larded with "pork and Christmas trees" - a $38.7 billion spending plan without Murphy's proposed millionaires' tax or any other significant revenue raisers which he said fails to set New Jersey on a stable fiscal path.

"You have no credibility if somebody argues on the one hand that we’re in a fiscal death spiral, and then you back up the truck and add hundreds of millions of dollars in pork spending to what we already kept, by the way, in the budget this year and then spend the rainy-day fund down to its last penny. Those two concepts do not compute," Gov. Murphy said.

The governor described a large army of staffers going through the budget, selecting unidentified targets for his veto pen - items he would strike to balance spending with revenues he certifies as reliable. He wouldn't say precisely what he plans to do - veto the budget, sign it or shut down the government.

"To be determined. To be determined. We have to look at the whole spectrum of our options, and we will look at the whole spectrum, and we will use very minute we have on the clock," he said.

If Gov. Murphy does veto parts of their budget, Democrats could go for an override. The budget passed by large margins. They noted their budget carries a $1.4 billion surplus and they’re unconcerned about discrepancies in revenue estimates.

"It's a good budget and I don't know why the governor would veto something. The reality is the corporate business tax, which the Legislature pushed in last year's budget, is what performed. And it performed extremely well. And we should all celebrate and be happy that numbers came in good," Senate President Steve Sweeney said.

Senate President Sweeney noted his Path to Progress agenda hasn't gotten Murphy's approval, yet, either.

"He didn't get a millionaires tax, he didn't get taxes, and I haven't gotten my property-tax relief from him, yet, either," Sen. Sweeney said. "We’re never going to always agree. We’re Democrats. Seriously."

Gov. Murphy accepts the battle over a millionaire's tax could extend for months, but said he wants a rainy-day fund, or money to safeguard against an inevitable recession. New Jersey is one of three states without one.
Last month, New Jersey Senate President Steve Sweeney was at Rutgers University’s main campus in New Brunswick. He was there to hold a town hall meeting to discuss “The Path to Progress,” an ambitious cost-cutting plan that would seek to right New Jersey’s perilous finances by cutting the state’s generous public worker pension and health benefits. Sweeney talked up his own union membership to the audience.

"Yeah, guess what? I work for a union, and I’m very proud of it," Sweeney said. "Very proud!"

Then he got up and left the stage, drowned out by a mostly hostile audience that was largely made up of union members. They booed. They called him a "union fraud." And they hid a speaker under the stage that took the panel assembled onstage by surprise when it started blasting out the 80's hair metal anthem, "We're Not Gonna Take It."

It was the latest incident in the battle between the unions and Sweeney, their longtime foe and chief antagonist since Republican Gov. Chris Christie left Trenton in 2017.

Sweeney's position on public worker benefits puts him at odds with their powerful unions, who wield a great degree of sway in New Jersey’s elections. But it also put him at odds with Christie’s successor, Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy, who has received a great degree of support from the public unions since he launched his gubernatorial campaign in 2016. Instead, Murphy wants to right the state’s fiscal ship through raising taxes on millionaires.

**With Skills Mapping, Colleges Create a 'Universal Language' to Explain Value**

*www.EducationDive.com*

Traditional colleges looking to fortify the liberal arts are adopting a practice from workforce-oriented institutions that aligns curriculum and job requirements. When Allison Cleveland-Roberts sought to make sure graduates at the University of South Florida were adequately prepared for today’s job market, she turned to an old resource, with a twist: help wanted ads.

Using data aggregated from actual job listings, Dr. Cleveland-Roberts was able to present faculty in the 22 most liberal arts-based departments she oversees with a list of the skills graduates needed to thrive in a variety of jobs.

"Some were baffled at the gaps they found," said the associate dean for academics in the College of Arts and Sciences at the 50,000-student research university based in Tampa. Among the 65 programs and 600 faculty within those 22 departments, they found a wide range of how professors accepted the advice and set out to make necessary changes. "Some hated it," she said, "but they still got the point."

**Dems Pass Budget with No Rich-Tax Hike**

*www.NJSpotlight.com*

More than 80 members of the Legislature voted in favor of the majority Democrats' $38.7 billion spending bill, an impressive show of force for the "no new taxes" posture they’ve adopted this year in the face of Gov. Phil Murphy’s repeated calls for increased levies on the rich.
The legislative budget bill passed along party lines in the Assembly, but it picked up several Republican votes in the Senate where members of the minority party credited their colleagues for rebuking the wishes of the Democratic governor.

The votes - 53-26 in the Assembly and 31-6 in the Senate - officially sent the spending bill to Murphy, where it faces an uncertain fate at best.

The governor has a little more than a week to decide whether he wants to remove sections of the legislators' budget using the line-item veto, or perhaps try to work out a compromise with leading lawmakers using the conditional veto. The wide vote margins could also dissuade Murphy from choosing an outright veto of the entire spending measure, as it would risk the first gubernatorial override in New Jersey in two decades or even a shutdown of state government.

Noteworthy: National Issues

Report: SAT-only Admissions: How Would It Change College Campuses?
www.CEW.Georgetown.Edu

If applicants were admitted to America's top 200 colleges based on their SAT scores alone, more than half of enrolled students would have to leave. The new class, comprising students with scores higher than 1250, would be less racially diverse and slightly more affluent. With test-only admissions, the share of White students at top colleges would rise from 66% to 75%; the combined share of Black and Latino students would decrease from 19% to 11%; and the share of Asian students would fall slightly, from 11% to 10%. Test-only admissions would set 1250 as the minimum SAT score for admission at the country’s top 200 colleges and raise the median SAT score from 1250 to 1320. Among students with scores below 1250, fewer Black and Latino students - groups typically assumed to benefit from affirmative action - are admitted than affluent White students. The share of affluent students at top colleges would only change slightly, rising from 60% to 63%, as a result of implementing this admissions policy.

Supreme Court to Decide DACA's Fate
www.EducationDive.com

The U.S. Supreme Court announced on June 28, 2019 that it will decide whether it was legal for the Trump administration to attempt to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program in 2017, The Wall Street Journal reported.

The Trump administration has contended the DACA program, which allows nearly 700,000 people to study and work in the U.S. in two-year blocks, is illegal because it was set up through an executive order. Several lower courts have blocked the Trump administration from phasing out the program. The Supreme Court is expected to reach a decision that will determine DACA's fate in 2020.

Democratic Divisions on Higher Ed
www.InsideHigherEd.com

Candidates vying for the Democratic nomination for president offered contrasting visions on college affordability and student debt in two debates this week.
Sen. Bernie Sanders, a Vermont Independent, and Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a Massachusetts Democrat, both have introduced campaign proposals for free public college and student debt cancellation.

Warren’s plan would cancel up to $50,000 in student debt for borrowers with incomes under six figures, as well as provide more limited debt relief for higher earning borrowers. The Sanders proposal, released this week, calls for cancelling all $1.5 trillion in outstanding U.S. student loan debt.

"I believe we must make public colleges and universities tuition free and eliminate student debt, and we do that by placing a tax on Wall Street," Sanders said at the second Democratic debate, on Thursday.

Other candidates, however, have argued for targeted college affordability measures and limited fixes for student borrowers.

**Pete Buttigieg**

The South Bend, Indiana, mayor said he and his husband, a teacher, hold six-figure student loan debt. Buttigieg supports giving borrowers the ability to refinance their student loan debt. He also said he wants to double the size of the Pell Grant, which will give students a maximum of $6,195 in the 2019-20 academic year.

"I support free public colleges for low-income and middle-income families," he said. "I just don't believe it makes sense for working-class families to subsidize tuition even for billionaires. The children of the wealthiest of Americans can pay at least a little bit of tuition."

Buttigieg also said he wants to enact policies, such as a $15 minimum wage, that will assist non-college graduates.

"Yes, it needs to be more affordable in this country to go to college, but it needs to be affordable in this country not to go to college," he said.

**Amy Klobuchar**

Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar said she supports free community college and a maximum Pell Grant of $12,000 a year. But she rejected calls for free four-year, public college.

Klobuchar also backs an option for borrowers to refinance their student loans.

"You have so many people that are having trouble affording college and having trouble affording their premiums," she said. "So, I do get concerned about paying for college for rich kids."

Klobuchar said both her father and sister got their first degrees from community colleges. "There's many paths to success, as well as certifications," she said.

**Joe Biden**

Biden, the former vice president and Delaware senator, said he backed free community college and debt relief for borrowers making less than $25,000 a year.
Elizabeth Warren

In closing remarks Wednesday, Warren told a personal story about how affordable tuition had opened a path to her for a college education.

"By the time I graduated from high school, my family - my family didn't have the money for a college application, much less a chance for me to go to college," she said. "But I got my chance. It was a $50-a-semester commuter college. That was a little slice of government that created some opportunity for a girl. And it opened my life."

Warren and Sanders Differ on How to Achieve a Common Goal - Free College

Senator Bernie Sanders, a contender for the 2020 Democratic nomination, recently released his plan to address growing student debt - universal cancellation of all debt regardless of circumstances. The Vermont Independent's announcement comes as debt cancellation is growing in popularity among Democrats. Sander’s plan extends on a proposal introduced by Senator Elizabeth Warren, the Massachusetts Democrat and fellow candidate for the nomination. Warren's plan would offer $50,000 in loan forgiveness for anyone making less than $100,000 a year, offer tiered loan forgiveness to those making more than that and offer no forgiveness to those making more than $250,000 a year. However, the Sanders plan simply promises to cancel all $1.6 trillion of the existing student loan debt regardless of income class. Both candidates have pledged in their respective higher-education plans to make two-year and four-year public college tuition free, as well as to invest in historically black colleges and other minority-serving institutions. In the previous presidential campaign, Sanders was the first to call for free public college education, a mantle that was taken on by Hillary Clinton after she won the Democratic nomination that year.

How Many Colleges and Universities Have Closed Since 2016?

The last few years have been tumultuous ones for colleges and universities in the U.S. Increased regulation and reduced enrollment continue to be among several factors contributing to the closure or consolidation of thousands of colleges and campuses around the country.

That consolidation also impacted the priorities of ones that remained open. Institutions are adding degrees and certificates in emerging tech fields such as artificial intelligence and cybersecurity and dropping low-enrollment programs including some of the liberal arts. They’re also looking online, where they can reach more students with targeted subject matter.

Click here to see the full list of nonprofit college closures since 2016.
See what's happening on our social sites: