



NEW JERSEY

Association of State Colleges and Universities

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nine state colleges and universities suffer sudden, additional cut

Trenton, Tuesday March 3, 2009--While State and college leaders are struggling to protect public higher education opportunity during a severe economic downturn, the presidents of New Jersey's nine state colleges and universities learned Monday that the state will withhold additional salary funds, amounting to at least \$2.75 million, collectively, from the institutions for the remainder of fiscal year 2008-2009.

The funds being withheld would have helped pay, in part, contractual salary obligations negotiated by the State of New Jersey. The institutions are obligated by law and contract to pay bargaining unit employees these monies.

Overall, this fiscal year, the colleges may be expected to make up as much as an \$18.5 million shortfall in salary funding, according to the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities (ASCU). This is on top of a loss of about \$30 million this year through cuts in direct state funding for college/university. Other senior public universities are facing similar cuts.

The state colleges and universities are operating with about the same amount of direct state funding as they received in fiscal 1999, 10 years ago, even though student enrollment has increased by about 25%, or 20,000 students. This is the *sixth funding cut since FY 2001*. During the past decade, the colleges have continued to improve productivity and to serve more New Jerseyans, but they have faced greater pressure to cut costs, reduce some services, and, as a last resort, to consider increasing fees paid by students and families. All the while, institutions have been working to sustain educational quality and maintain and build needed facilities. "We are working together, with our top focus being on students," says Ramapo president Peter Mercer, chair of the presidents' council for the nine institutions.

NJ's budget crisis and the latest cut in aid comes at a time when more New Jerseyans than ever are seeking admission to one or more of the state institutions. ASCU Executive Director/CEO Darryl G. Greer says: "The colleges already turn away too many qualified applicants and now, with a sagging economy and a long-term need for a well-educated workforce, there are many more prospective students knocking on our doors. With state funding now paying for about 30% of total college spending, and no signs of increased state investment, future college opportunity and affordability are very much at stake."

www.njascu.org

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

*New Jersey City University
Ramapo College of New Jersey
Richard Stockton College of New Jersey*

*Rowan University
Thomas Edison State College
William Paterson University*

ASCU will publish later this month its annual Accountability Sourcebook, highlighting enrollment and funding trends, and how NJ state colleges and universities measure up, nationally. Even though the ASCU institutions are recognized as among some of the best nationally, during 2006-2008, NJ ranked 50th among the states in new investment in higher education, according to national survey data.

ASCU is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization created by the State of New Jersey in 1985. Its members are: The College of New Jersey, Kean University, Montclair State University, New Jersey City University, Ramapo College of New Jersey, Richard Stockton College, Rowan University, Thomas Edison State College and William Paterson University.