



## Affordability and Accessibility at NJASCU Institutions and the Concept of “Free” College

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- ◆ Providing affordable, accessible, and high-quality education is the mission of New Jersey’s senior public colleges and universities.
- ◆ We believe the key to achieving that mission is a student-centric approach by having the financial aid money follow the student irrespective of where he or she chooses to go to school. We need to create a Student Financial Aid (SFA) program that features financial aid going directly to the student, instead of the current Tuition Aid Grant (TAG), **which is based upon the institution and sector of New Jersey higher education he or she attends.** The New Jersey Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) epitomizes this philosophy and has produced some of New Jersey’s greatest government and business leaders in spite of coming from exceptionally challenging socio-economic circumstances.
- ◆ Free college tuition programs (two-year or four-year) 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. These other fiscal challenges may thwart a student’s ability to achieve academic success.
  - Subsidizing all students is an inefficient 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 strategies for those students who meet family income levels of \$60,000 or less.

The public colleges and universities would be in a much better position to keep tuition and fees as low as possible if the state would do the following:

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[www.njascu.org](http://www.njascu.org)

- ◆ *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.
  - ☑ 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.
  - Reform the burdensome State College Contracts Law (SCCL) to enable the state colleges and universities to operate under the same regulations as the research institutions. The SCCL requirements cost the state colleges and universities time and money in procurement and construction.
  - Provide 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.