



NEW JERSEY

# Association of State Colleges and Universities

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**QuickTakes!**

## **Recession is Long Gone, So Where's the Money for NJ Colleges?**

On Wednesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 60 people attended the NJASCU-sponsored screening of the documentary film *Starving the Beast* at the Garden Theatre in Princeton. After the movie, NJASCU CEO Michael Klein led a discussion with audience members on some of the issues raised by the movie and the relevance to New Jersey's public colleges and universities. Below is NJ101.5 reporter Dino Flammia's account of Mike Klein's commentary on the topic.

April 13, 2017

Are public higher education institutions in New Jersey starving for help from the state?

The Garden State is not mentioned during the 2016 documentary film "Starving the Beast" – which analyzes the systematic defunding of higher education nationwide – but New Jersey is no stranger to the trend, according to Michael Klein, executive director of the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities.

According to "Starving the Beast," investment in public higher education peaked in 1980 nationwide when roughly 60 percent of university funding was provided directly from state governments. By 2015, that investment had fallen to an average of 12 percent.

Over the 25-year period from fiscal years 1991 to 2016, state appropriations to New Jersey's state colleges and universities decreased by more than \$8.4 million, or 4.35 percent, Klein said. Per-student funding dropped nearly 40 percent over the same time frame as enrollment at public institutions increased about 58 percent.

Between 2006 and 2007, no state imposed a larger cut on higher education appropriations than New Jersey (2.7 percent), Klein added.

"A great driver of (decreased funding) in the recent past was the recession," Klein told New Jersey 101.5. "New Jersey's been very slow to recover from the cuts that they've made."

And to cover for the shortfall, New Jersey has seen a corresponding increase in tuition rates. But compared to much of the nation, increases in New Jersey have been relatively calm.

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

*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 College University  
William Paterson University*

According to the College Board, public four-year institutions in New Jersey implemented the 10<sup>th</sup>-lowest increase in tuition (5.85 percent) between fiscal years 2012 and 2017.

“We’ve got very strong and generous state-provided financial aid programs which students won’t even know about if they’re scared off by the sticker price itself,” Klein said.

Holding somewhat of a line on increased fees for students is the [\\$750 million bond issue approved by New Jersey voters](#) in 2012, which cleared the way for construction projects and upgrades at dozens of institutions – both public and private. Gov. Chris Christie signed into law in March a bill that allocates the final \$34 million.

Through Fiscal Year 2018, Christie’s proposed budget includes flat funding for higher education compared to this and last fiscal year, Klein said. But current numbers represent a 7 percent cut from FY 2015 funds.

A coordinated series of rallies were held at seven state colleges and universities Wednesday to “warn of the potential demise of higher education” in New Jersey due to decreased funding.

The association hosted a free screening of the 95-minute film Wednesday night at Princeton Garden Theatre, followed by a discussion with Klein.