

Suffolk Community College Board Freezes Tuition for Second Consecutive Year

For the second consecutive year, Suffolk County Community College's Board of Trustees voted unanimously to freeze tuition at the State University of New York's largest community college, citing the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and strain it has put on students, their families, and finances.

The Board adopted a \$208 million College operating budget at its monthly meeting for the 2021-22 academic year that includes no tuition increase and represents a \$5 million reduction in expenditures from 2020-21. Additionally, fees will also remain flat or in some cases be reduced.

"By freezing tuition and fees, we are not only prioritizing students, but working to ensure cost is not a barrier to receiving a quality and affordable education," said Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone.

"Facing unprecedented pandemic-driven revenue losses we are committed to remain the affordable, high quality, accessible resource for Suffolk residents that we have always been," said Suffolk County Community College Board of Trustees Chair E. Christopher Murray. We know many are unexpectedly out of work and others are looking for convenient, close-to-home options to pursue their college education. Suffolk County Community College is and will continue to be here for them," Mr. Murray said.

Mr. Murray said the College faced a more than \$2.5 million budget hole resulting from an enrollment decline and the resulting loss of tuition, and pandemic driven costs and reductions in state aid.

College Board of Trustees Budget and Finance Chair Kevin M. O'Connor said sound fiscal management combined with belt-tightening initiatives, as well as staff reductions through attrition, not filling va-

cant lines, reconfiguring course sections to be more efficient and the College's workers who voluntarily agreed to wage and benefit reductions helped ensure that Suffolk County Community College will continue to be an affordable, premier provider of higher education and workforce training.

"Freezing tuition and reducing fees are tangible manifestations of the trustees' and our county partner's commitment to our most important mission, the futures of our students," said Jim Morgo, vice chair of the Board of Trustees.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has hit Suffolk students particularly hard," Mr. O'Connor said. "The Board of Trustees recognizes that we cannot ask our students and their families to shoulder a greater share of the burden during this tough time. Suffolk County Community College is the most affordable, accessible option to get a great education - and the Board intends to keep it that way."

"Suffolk County Community College is a beacon of opportunity for many students who have few options when it comes to higher education" said Suffolk County Community College Interim President Louis Petrizzo. "By their actions today, our Board has ensured that a door to opportunity and advancement remains open and affordable for thousands of students."

Suffolk County Community College tuition is \$2,735 per semester for Suffolk County res-

