



To: SUNY Old Westbury Faculty
From: Rhesa Ramdeen, NYPIRG Project Coordinator
Subject: March 11th Rally in Albany
Date: February 19, 2003

Dear Faculty Member,

Governor Pataki has released the new budget for New York State, and it is devastating for higher education. The budget includes proposals such as a \$1200 tuition increase, a 1/3 cut to the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), a 50% cut to the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), elimination of the Collegiate-Science and Technology Entry Program (C-STEP), and a cut of \$184 million to the SUNY operating budget. These proposals, if put into effect, will not only be devastating to the lives of students but will also adversely affect anyone who is affiliated with the college, including faculty. To make matters worse, this combination of a massive tuition hike plus cuts to financial aid comes at a time when many students already find it very difficult to afford a college education.

With cuts to the SUNY operating budget, students are being asked to pay more and get less. It is expected that class availability will be severely limited, there will be cuts to various services like library hours and computer lab hours, as well as major cuts to faculty lines. Mr. Candelario Franco, United University Professionals (UUP) chapter president for Old Westbury has estimated that over 4000 professors will be laid off from the SUNY system if these proposals are approved by the State Legislature. Students, faculty and staff at Old Westbury and colleges across the state must join together to fight these proposed cuts to higher education.

On Tuesday, March 11th, thousands of people will attend a rally for higher education in Albany. We need your help. First, we would like to invite you to come to Albany and participate in the rally. Additionally, we also ask that you help us spread the word and encourage your students to attend. Furthermore, if you teach classes on Tuesdays, we ask that you allow interested students to attend the rally without penalty. We are aware that some teachers may have midterms scheduled on that day, which creates a very tough situation for both students and faculty. Perhaps you can provide a midterm makeup date for the students want to attend the rally, or even reschedule the exam. Professors who do not have classes on Tuesdays can even help encourage students to attend the rally by giving some form of extra credit to those who attend. Of course, we will provide you with a list of students who attend the event for your records. We also ask that you allow us a couple minutes in your classes to talk to students about these and other upcoming events.

These efforts are essential to ensure that students organize to have their voices heard in

Albany by the legislators who will be deciding the fate of higher education in New York State. On the form below, please indicate what you will do to encourage student attendance at the rally, and return through interoffice mail to NYPIRG, A113, Academic Village by Friday, February 28th. Feel free to contact us with any questions at (516) 876- 8126 (outside line) or email me at rramdeen@nypirg.org

Thank you in advance for your support. We hope to see you in Albany on March 11th!

Sincerely,

Rhesa Ramdeen,

-----Please return to NYPIRG, Room A113, by February 28th-----

Name _____ Office location and Phone # _____

Class(es) location(s) and times _____

Best days and times to contact you _____

I will (check any that apply):

___ Allow NYPIRG to speak in my classes

___ Allow my Tuesday classes to attend the rally without penalty

___ Reschedule midterms or provide a makeup date for students who want to attend the rally

___ Give extra credit for students that attend the rally

___ Other _____