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College Students Visit Albany to Support Strengthening TAP

Over 100,000 emails sent to legislators in 4 weeks

Albany, NY - On Tuesday, March 4, hundreds of students and faculty held their annual Lobby Day to urge legislators to strengthen the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). The students and faculty represent the Association of Proprietary Colleges (APC). In the month prior to visiting Albany, students sent over 100,000 emails to their legislators outlining their support for strengthening TAP.

Students and faculty met with state officials to recommend the following:

Allow proprietary college students to receive part-time TAP.

In 2006-07 part time TAP eligibility was extended to cover all students attending public and independent colleges. Proprietary sector students were excluded. This, despite the fact that proprietary colleges have the most diverse and financially needy student body of all four higher education sectors. The student, not the institution, should define the program requirements.

Students who attend APC Colleges part-time, often have jobs or family obligations that prevent them from attending full-time. These students are attending college so that they can improve their job prospects and better support their families. Access to part-time TAP can make this possible.

Make TAP available to financially needy independent students.

Undergraduate TAP for independent students has not increased since 1990-91. This means that self-supporting adults must earn less than \$10,000 per year to be eligible. That number is below the 2007 federal poverty guidelines.

APC Colleges support increasing financially independent students' income eligibility for TAP from \$10,000 to \$20,000.

Expand the TAP Program to keep pace with the rising costs of higher education.

In 2000 the Legislature expanded the income and tuition levels in the TAP program so that college would be affordable for a broader population. Since then, college tuition has risen between 20 and 30% yet TAP schedules have remained the same.

APC Colleges support:

- Increasing the maximum TAP award for dependent students from \$5,000 to \$6,000;
- Increasing the maximum TAP award for independent students from \$3,025 to \$4,000;
- Increasing the minimum TAP award from \$500 to \$1,000; and
- Increasing financially dependent students' income eligibility for TAP from \$80,000 to \$100,000.

The Association of Proprietary Colleges is comprised of 30 colleges located on 36 campuses across New York State enrolling more than 35,000 students. Proprietary colleges are one of the four sectors of higher education in New York in addition to SUNY, CUNY and the independent colleges. APC Colleges' degrees awarded range from associate to doctoral; and job placement rates for graduates run as high as 98%. www.apc-colleges.org

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