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Testimony before New York State Joint Senate and Assembly
Standing Committees on Higher Education
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On behalf of the State University of New York at Binghamton (Binghamton University) we would like to thank the Senate and Assembly for holding these important public hearings. I especially want to thank the Chair of the Senate Higher Education Committee, Senator Ken LaValle and the Honorable Deborah Glick, Chairperson of the Assembly Committee on Higher Education, as well as members of the Senate and Assembly, especially our local Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo, who has been a strong supporter of Binghamton University.

Binghamton University is pleased to have this opportunity to meet with our leaders in Albany to recognize the importance of their continued support for our campus and for all of SUNY. Speaking from my perspective as President of Binghamton University I can say, unequivocally, that this support has strengthened our campus, provided access for deserving students, and had a significant impact on the economic and social vitality of the Southern Tier. At the same time, I also would like to indicate some of the challenges my campus faces as we work to meet the educational needs of the state's citizens while pursuing important external activities vital to the State's economic resurgence.

First, let me describe the benefits that have accrued to Binghamton University and to the Southern Tier as a result of the continued funding from the Rational Tuition Plan. As Chancellor Zimpher has discussed, implementation of NYSUNY 2020 has significantly reduced the uncertainties—for both students and campuses—that used to attend the annual discussions regarding tuition and campus revenues. Because of the leadership provided by our Senate and Assembly members, as well as Governor Cuomo, Binghamton University has had a strong and

predictable source of revenues; at the same time, students and parents have been much better prepared to understand, plan for, and meet the incremental tuition increases that are part of the NYSUNY 2020 plan.

One of the fundamental parts of NYSUNY 2020 for Binghamton was its provision that our campus would be able to expand our enrollment by 2000 students. Having nearly met this objective this past fall after three years of growth, I can say that it is having a real impact, not only on the vibrancy of the campus, but also in the vitality of the community that surrounds us. According to conservative economic impact models, we estimate that each student has an annual impact of over \$50,000 in the community. By this measure alone, NYSUNY 2020 has had a powerful stimulating effect on the region; given the Southern Tier's still-lagging economy, I believe it is imperative that this support continues.

The resources that have come to Binghamton as a result of the Rational Tuition Plan have enabled us to significantly strengthen our academic and research programs. By next year, Binghamton will have added 150 net new faculty since the start of NYSUNY 2020. These faculty are both experienced scholars and outstanding young researchers. For example, among the 46 faculty we hired this fall, 39 have received PhDs from universities listed among the nation's top-50 research universities. Importantly, these new hires have allowed us to reduce our student:faculty ratio—even as we have increased our total enrollment. Among our new hires have been a number of senior faculty who have joined Binghamton University after leaving prestigious institutions including Columbia, Carnegie Mellon, and Purdue. Chancellor Zimpher has rightly emphasized the importance of highly skilled, highly effective researchers and the value that they bring to SUNY and New York state. The Master Researchers Program in the Executive Budget is a very important item that has the potential to significantly increase SUNY's

research productivity while adding millions of dollars in impact to the state's economy. At Binghamton we have already seen the effect that a well-established senior researcher can have on a campus. We are in the process of hiring away from the University of California-Los Angeles one of the nations most renowned researchers in the field of neuroscience. This new faculty member will bring to Binghamton millions of dollars in federal grants and graduate student support. The Master Researchers program would enable us to expand our recruiting efforts to attract similar faculty in other fields resulting not only in increases in outside resources and enhanced economic impact, but also strengthening our reputation and visibility among top research institutions.

Chancellor Zimpher has urged that the Legislature consider extending the funding promises of NY-SUNY 2020 through the end of the decade. At Binghamton, such funding would provide resources that would enable us to improve learning spaces and develop teaching laboratories that would strengthen our pedagogy and produce better learning outcomes. Binghamton University students feel strongly that these improvements are entirely worth the relatively small increases in tuition that fund them. It is crucial that the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) provision of NYSUNY 2020 be continued if we are to sustain our academic momentum. Because MOE ensures that tuition costs are directly invested in students' education while at the same time providing for regular and appropriate tuition increases, MOE has helped Binghamton plan more effectively for the future by enabling us to estimate more accurately the costs involved in establishing new academic programs and strengthening existing ones.

The Governor has proposed \$50 million in support for a new School of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Pharmacy at Binghamton, in addition to \$10 million allocated last year. I strongly urge you to support this measure. First, the school will meet a significant unmet need for

residents and students of New York state, with the only existing public pharmacy school in the state receiving nine applications for every seat it offers. Second, the new School of Pharmacy will enable the campus to work closely with industrial partners in a fast-growing area of research and technology development, while complementing the already strong programs we have in health-related fields. Third, and most important, the School will contribute directly to the economic revitalization of a significantly depressed area. We estimate that when the School opens it will have an annual regional economic impact in excess of \$100 million. By placing the new campus in Johnson City we are developing a new locus of economic activity including retail, housing, and industry.

Binghamton's growth and development in faculty, students, and academic programs is a welcome turn for the campus. However, I am concerned that the progress we are making may be partially offset if the state is unable to fund already-negotiated salary increases for our faculty and staff. Without a commitment of funds from the state, Binghamton University will be forced to significantly reduce our faculty and staff hiring plans; this will have a detrimental impact not only on the educational and research programs of the University, but also will limit the impact that bringing in new faculty and staff has on the regional economy. Up to this point, the failure to fund these negotiated salary increases has caused the University to redirect approximately \$7 million per year that otherwise would have paid for an additional 70 to 80 faculty and staff who would have strengthened our academic and co-curricular programming.

I am pleased that the Executive Budget has established a long-term Critical Maintenance budget, funded at \$200 million annually. Nonetheless, I am concerned that this level may prove insufficient to meet the on-going maintenance needs of our campus. At Binghamton we are especially in need of repairs to our infrastructure—electrical and heating systems, fire alarm,

etc.—as well as periodic renovations to classroom and research space necessary to meet the educational needs of students as well as state-of-the art research facilities required by our faculty.

I strongly urge you to consider Chancellor Zimpher's request that the SUNY Critical Maintenance fund be significantly increased.

Binghamton University is honored to play a key role in the education of the states' citizens. Our scholars and researchers excel in the process of discovery that drives new technologies and fosters new understandings of the world we live in. And we are proud that our campus is continually adding to the economic vitality of our region and state. Each year, Binghamton produces more than 1.2 billion dollars in economic impact—approximately eight times the states' investment in our campus. This is an extraordinary return on investment.

But we can and want to do more. So I thank you for your consideration of Chancellor Zimpher's request for enhanced funding for SUNY. I believe that the initiatives she champions will have a powerful impact on Binghamton University and its surrounding communities. More students will receive an even better education, more industry will partner with us in research in fields such as healthcare and high technology, and more residents of the Southern Tier will benefit from the economic engine that is Binghamton University.

Thank you for your time.

