

**Division of the Budget
Public Hearing, November 30, 2007
H. Lee Dennison Building**

**Comments by:
Hubert Keen, President
Farmingdale State College—SUNY**

Thank you for the opportunity to address issues of concern to Farmingdale State College and the State University of New York during the budget-making process. Governor Spitzer has expressed a vision of access and increased quality for higher education in New York, and many people are optimistic that his vision can be attained.

During my years in SUNY I have seen literally thousands of examples of how access to a college education has enriched lives that might otherwise have been lived out with unfulfilled potential. The demographic complexity that exists and that will continue to unfold in the State demands that we place a high priority on sustaining and expanding opportunities for college education.

The demand for ever higher levels of technical expertise in the business, industrial and service sectors of the State calls for outstanding public colleges and universities. We are challenged every day to collaborate in providing graduates who can assume complex jobs with little or no additional training and in finding new technologies. In considerable part we have responded to these challenges.

However, developing and sustaining quality in higher education is not possible without sustained funding. The intricate and complex development of academic programs and research capability cannot be maintained when there are wide swings in support. Over a four-year period beginning in 2000, my own college lost 12% of its full-time faculty. Now, three years later, we have built the faculty back to 6% above the year 2000. But we do not know if we will drop back to the 2000 level by next year. In order to attain national and international prominence as teaching and research institutions, it is essential to smooth the funding mechanisms and provide levels befitting excellence. I urge that you develop a budget that addresses consistent and predictable tuition for students and stable operating funds for institutions.

Excellent faculty are the essential component of quality in colleges and universities. The SUNY System has just 65% full-time faculty, lower than comparable national peers, and it needs more than 1000 additional faculty to reach national norms. But Farmingdale has just 36% full-time faculty. In order to reach the SUNY average of 65%, not the national norm, and given its enrollment today, Farmingdale needs to add 57 full-time faculty. To be able to reach the SUNY average during the coming years in percent of full-time faculty would place Farmingdale in a competitive position relative to its national peers.

But these facts belie a very upbeat view at Farmingdale about the future and pride in our recent accomplishments. Our enrollment has increased by 25% over the last seven years,

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but not at the expense of selectivity which has increased consistently over that same period. We are not increasing enrollment for the sake of growing. Students are attracted to our degree programs because they provide a clear pathway to an affordable college education, and our programs lead to a productive career in the high technology economy on Long Island.

If the State wants to support high quality of college education in the center of Long Island that best serves the business, industry and service sectors here, then it must support the continued development of excellent academic programs at Farmingdale State. Many of the elements are in place to sustain the change that will help fulfill the Governor's vision and create a model institution of service to the Long Island region that will attain national stature, and an institution of which the State will be proud.