

Leader asks SUNY friends to fight cuts

Says NY budget unfair

BY JEREMIAH HARRIGAN
Times Herald-Record

NEW PALTZ — Saying that SUNY colleges are being unfairly singled out for state budget cutbacks, SUNY New Paltz President Steve Poskanzer has launched a public appeal to prevent further economic damage.

In a letter addressed to various "friends" of the college — students, their parents, staff members and legislators — Poskanzer said Wednesday that he is simultaneously trying to educate the people who pay for higher education and turn back legislative efforts that he said will make conditions worse.

And, he said, he's not alone in his efforts — a number of other colleges and universities have, like New Paltz, created Web sites urging people to pressure their legislators not to approve the proposed cuts and the way in which they could be imposed.

Poskanzer acknowledges that every state institution has had to bite the budgetary bullet, but the SUNY system has had to bite more than 10 percent harder than any other educational institution, such as community colleges and the City University of New York.

And those problems have already begun with the first half of a \$620 tuition increase that was imposed this semester. The balance of that hike

**SUNY New Paltz
President Steve
Poskanzer worries
the tuition increase
will go into the
state's general fund.**

will be charged next semester.

If the increase wasn't enough, Poskanzer argues, most of this "unfair tax on students and their families" won't even go to SUNY — it will be "swept" up by the state into the general fund.



Poskanzer

"That's just wrong," Poskanzer said.

The possibility that some of the \$2.5 billion in federal stimulus funds earmarked for education in

New York could improve the picture, he said, but there's no telling how that money will be split up yet.

"For all we know, it could all go to K-through-12 education," Poskanzer said.

The possibility that the Legislature could agree to sweeping most of the tuition hike into noneducational budget lines when the budget is scheduled to be voted on in April is nothing less than "a breach of faith with students," he said.

"Here's hoping that wiser heads in the executive and legislative branches prevail."

jhorrigan@th-record.com