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# EMPIRE STATE

## Higher education chalks up wins, losses

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ALBANY — The state budget is considered a mixed bag for higher education: Cuts were averted to the Tuition Assistance Program and community colleges, but most of a State University of New York tuition hike is going to other government programs, not the schools.

Opinions are split on a new state loan program for students.

The budget, which lawmakers finished voting on Friday, does not include a proposal by Gov. David Paterson to cut community-college funding by 10 percent. It doesn't include recommended reductions in Tuition Assistance Program, or TAP.

The Legislature adopted the governor's recommendation to have the state retain 80 percent of the tuition increase, bringing in \$132 million a year to the state's coffers and \$33 million for

the colleges.

The tuition hike will raise \$165 million, bringing tuition to \$4,970 a year for a full-time student.

While the SUNY Student Assembly and the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities applauded a new student-loan program — called the New York Higher Education Loan Program — the New York Public Interest Research Group and the Schuyler Center

for Analysis and Advocacy criticized it.

Beginning in January, NYHELPS will offer student loans at rates well below the interest rates of between 12 percent and 17 percent that are available in the private loan market, according to the Higher Education Services Corp., which will run NYHELPS.

NYHELPS loans will be available to students who exhaust all state and federal student aid.