

ISLANDWIDE

LI colleges to reap budget benefits

■ SUNY officials say more is needed, but 12 percent boost for next year means more faculty and programs

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State University of New York trustees adopted a \$2.26 billion financial allocation yesterday for the system's 29 four-year colleges and professional schools, a 12 percent increase over the current year's funding. The budget includes money for 380 additional full-time faculty, a high priority for SUNY Chancellor John Ryan and local campus presidents.

"Our top priority is faculty," said Stony Brook University President Shirley Strum Kenny, though she could not say yet how many would be hired on her campus. Stony Brook's allocation is \$290.4 million, which includes state funding and tuition revenue, a 9.8 percent increase over last year.

"It's very important for us to be able to hire faculty and keep the quality we have for the larger number of students," she said, noting the university anticipated its largest freshman class ever this fall — 2,750, up from 2,508 last year.

Jonathan Gibraltar, president of Farmingdale State University, said the \$38.6 million his school is due, a 12 percent increase over last year, was "more than we've

been helped in a long time . . . This is an historic budget for us."

He said the allocation means the college has the potential to hire as many as 20 full-time faculty, on top of the 20 the college had already planned to hire.

Calvin O. Butts III, president of SUNY Old Westbury, said his school's \$26.9 million allocation, a 16 percent increase over last year, would enable the college to address faculty needs in education and business programs.

"I would say that, for the first time in my being at Old Westbury, we have a fair budget," he said, but added, "That doesn't mean that we don't need more . . ."

The budget plan won praise

from Bill Scheuerman, the president of the 32,000-member SUNY faculty union, United University Professions, who called it "long overdue." Scheuerman said the budget was a big step toward addressing campuses' faculty needs.

"In 1994, we had 10,296 full-time faculty, and now we have 9,490," while enrollment has grown by 40,000 during that period, Scheuerman said.

The state's community colleges also saw increases in another part of the state budget that is separate from SUNY funding. But officials at Nassau and Suffolk community colleges said those increases were not enough to prevent proposed tuition hikes — \$170 at Nassau, which would bring

tuition to \$3,310 a year, and \$110 at Suffolk, for a \$3,100 annual tuition.

Statewide, operating aid for community colleges was increased \$175 per full-time equivalent student, to \$2,525.

Reginald Tuggle, spokesman for Nassau Community, said the increase was "pretty reasonable," but added that over the last six years "we've gotten increases of less than 1 percent from the state," which he said accounts for only about 25 percent of the college's budget.

Suffolk Community's spokeswoman, Mary Lou Araneo, praised the increase, but added, "We still have other things we need to do to maintain quality, so it's not going to minimize the amount of tuition increase."