

- Six of 10 Full-Time Undergraduates Get Need-Based, Tuition-Free Education
- \$770 million in Pell/TAP for 170,000 Students
- Borrow Less, Save More
- \$1.1 Billion in Financial Aid to CUNY Students in 2010-11
- Education for City's High-Demand Fields
- World-Class Faculty, Student Award Winners
- An Exceptional, Affordable Education

Full-Time Tuition and Fees

Public and Private Four-Year Institutions: Average Tuition and Fees, 2011-12

Columbia University	\$45,290
New York University	\$41,606
Fordham University	\$39,967
Pace University	\$35,032
Hofstra University	\$34,150
College of New Rochelle	\$29,100
Adelphi University	\$28,460
University of California	\$13,190
Rutgers University	\$12,554
University of Minnesota	\$12,256
University of Virginia	\$11,576
University of Connecticut	\$10,670
The University of Texas - Austin	\$9,794
University of North Texas System	\$8,349
University of Colorado	\$8,249
University of Wisconsin System	\$7,747
University System of Maryland	\$7,713
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities	\$7,422
Colorado State University System	\$7,156
Texas A&M University System	\$6,975
SUNY	\$6,403
California State	\$6,326
CUNY	\$5,130 + \$386 Fees

Public Community College Systems: Average Tuition and Fees, 2011-12

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities	\$5,161
Massachusetts Community Colleges	\$4,928
University of Wisconsin System	\$4,882
SUNY*	\$4,155
CUNY	\$3,600 + \$343 Fees
Virginia Community College System	\$3,737
Maryland Community Colleges	\$3,538
Connecticut Community College System	\$3,490
University System of Georgia	\$3,444
Colorado Community College System	\$3,414
City Colleges of Chicago	\$3,070

* Excludes SUNY Technical Colleges (Alfred, Canton, Cobleskill, Delhi, Morrisville)
Source: The College Board

When Tuition at CUNY Was Free, Sort of

CUNY was for many years associated with free tuition, so much so that people still refer to a time, not so long ago, when everybody attending New York City's public colleges did so without paying a dime. The reality, however, is more complicated. A free education for students regardless of their background or financial means underpinned the original Free Academy — and declared higher education an important societal investment — when it was established in Manhattan in 1847. Back then, a class typically averaged about 100 or so students. But starting in the early 20th century, as enrollments grew, many accomplished students opened their wallets to study in the city's halls of public higher education. In 1909, two years after moving to more spacious accommodations in Harlem, City College expanded its offerings to include a separate evening baccalaureate program. Over time, the system's night schools of general studies expanded throughout the city and served tens of thousands of non-matriculants. These students paid for their courses. Financial aid for needy students was non-existent. Tuition, known then as instructional fees, was uniform for all non-matriculants, who paid regardless of their... / *more* >>

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financial circumstances. Many hoped that one day their grade point average would permit transfer to the more prestigious — and free — day schools. Others attended at night because they needed to work during the day.

For many needy students in this pre-financial aid era, tuition was a hardship. In fall 1957, for example, nearly 36,000 attended Hunter, Brooklyn, Queens and City Colleges for free, but another 24,000 paid tuition of up to \$300 a year — the equivalent of \$2,411.98 today, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' online inflation calculator.

That year, in fact, undergraduate tuition and other student fees comprised 17 percent of \$46.8 million in the colleges' revenues, about \$7.74 million — a figure equivalent to \$62.4 million in buying power today. Even with tuition, a public higher education was an extraordinary value. New York University, for example, raised its tuition to \$900 that year.

Merit-based free tuition survived through much of the last century until 1970, when the University dropped all tuition charges and accepted any student with a high school diploma. The move ushered in a brief period of free tuition for all undergraduate students that would not survive the economic realities. In fall 1976, amid the turmoil of a dire city fiscal crisis, the free-tuition policy was discontinued under pressure from the federal government, the state, and the financial community critical to rescuing the city from bankruptcy.

As part of the transition, New York State took over funding of CUNY's senior colleges and tuition was instituted at all CUNY colleges. CUNY students were added to the state's need-based Tuition Assistance Program, or TAP, which had been created during the early 1970s to help private colleges. Full-time students who met the income eligibility criteria were permitted to receive TAP, ensuring for the first time that financial hardship would deprive no CUNY student of a

college education. Within a few years, the federal government would create its own need-based program, known as Pell Grants, providing the neediest students with a tuition-free college education.

Pell and TAP awards for CUNY students reached a record \$770 million for the 2010-2011 academic year. They enabled nearly 90,000 students to attend CUNY tuition-free. Another 10,000 have at least half their tuition covered by TAP and Pell and are eligible for a federal tax credit that pays the balance of their tuition. All told, 48 percent of CUNY undergraduates paid no tuition.

Since 1976 these programs have provided tuition-free education for many, many thousands of undergraduate students. Combined with CUNY's bedrock policies of academic excellence and affordable tuition, they continue to make the University one of the nation's most outstanding higher education values, in keeping with the mission of service and access that can be traced to its founding in 1847.

There are some who remain wistful for the return of traditional free tuition for all as a more just societal imperative, despite CUNY's evolution, financing structure and state-funded status along with SUNY, which has always charged tuition. At stake today, however, is the challenge of providing a quality education and student support services on an unprecedented scale, to 270,000 degree-seeking students and at least 250,000 adult and continuing-education students.

These 21st century realities require year-round fundraising and resource acquisition, to provide facilities and instrumentation, services and programs of a complexity far beyond days of old when teaching on line meant talking to students during class registration. CUNY's tuition history has tracked with the economic realities of fulfilling the University's historic mission — the principle of a free or low-cost quality public higher education that has connected many generations of immigrant New Yorkers and their children, those not born into wealth, to the ladder to social, economic and educational success.